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Printed at the request of and out of the h
MOTHER YVONNE LEMOINE of France, a
lower of Yoga, a devotee of the Holy Maste
wisher of The Divine Life Society.

H.H. SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA

tutes a sincere attempt to serve earnest seekers after spiritual Truth and to spread a Great Wisdom that is likely to be of benefit to mankind. This task was gladly undertaken many years back upon the express wish and direction of my Holy Master Swami Sivananda Gurudev. At his feet I place this work humbly as an offering in gratefulness to him and in thankfulness for his having induced me to serve the seekers of this present 20th Century. The Holy Master Swami Sivananda, himself a great Yoga-teacher known all over the world instructed me to give these lessons at the time when he established the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy in his Ashram at Rishikesh and commenced daily classes under the auspices of the above Academy. The said lessons were very carefully recorded in shorthand script and are now made available in this book after recorrection, revising, arranging and fresh editing. For this my grateful thanks to Brahmachariji Sri Keshav Chaitanya, M.A., of Orissa who has given his valuable time, earnest attention and willing labour to this task.

The word Yoga has generally come to denote the path of meditation or Dhyana dealt with in the science of Raja Yoga. This is the ancient science of inner discipline, training and perfection of the mind so as to make it a fit and efficient instrument for the right practice of effective and successful Meditation. This path or system is most liked by the occidental seeker because it is scientific in its approach and very systematic in its structure. Also it transcends all religious dogma and presents itself

to you as an unbiased non-sectarian scientific spiritual discipline as distinct from any religious ritual or practice. As such it constitutes a method and technique available to people of any part of the world without disturbing their faith or practice of their religion.

There is one Universal Spirit addressed variously as Jehovah, Allah, Ahura Mazda, Almighty Father-in-Heaven, Brahman, the Tao or Thing-in-Itself or GOD. This is the Universal Spirit, adored and worshipped in temple, synagogue, church, mosque, fire-temple and all places of worship. This is the Universal Spirit glorified and praised in all the scriptures like the Vedas, the Talmud and the Torah, in Bible, Quoran, Zendavesta, etc. This Universal Being is the object of the meditation of the meditator in the path of Raja Yoga. Meditation upon this All-Perfect Universal Being raises one beyond the plane of mind and intellect and takes the seeker into a plane of superconsciousness wherein he is liberated from the bondage to Matter and freed from all mortal afflictions of this empirical earth-existence. This is the goal of Raja Yoga. The path is purity of character and conduct, cleansing of one's nature physically and mentally, self-restraint, devotion, harmonising one's vital sheaths, withdrawal, concentration and meditation. It is thus a path wherein we find incorporated the Universal principles and features of the essential spiritual disciplines that elevate the seeker into God-experience. I wish one and all of the readers this supreme experience. I pray for their ultimate success in their spiritual life and

Sadhana. Success comes through continuous earnest striving. Therefore, O Seekers, strive diligently upon the path of Yoga and you will surely reach the goal without fail.

My thanks are due to Sri Swami Dhyananandaji whose enthusiasm and keen eagerness has a large share in this undertaking and to Mother Yvonne Lemoine of France residing at our Ashram whose gracious, generous donation has enabled the quick completion of this work. My appreciation and gratefulness also to Sri Brahmaji who helped in composing the matter for print and to Swamis Sri Jnananandaji, Sri Brahmanandaji and Sri Vivekanandaji in the Ashram Press for helping to complete the book by their kind reading of the manuscripts and its proofs. God bless them all.

It is hoped that this little book will be of help and benefit to all sincere seekers.

It belongs to the Holy Gurudev Sivananda and it belongs to you. Homage unto the Holy Master.

Swami Chidananda

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MOTHER YVONNE LEMOINE

PATH TO BLESSEDNESS

INTRODUCTION

THE TWO PATHS—THE PLEASANT AND THE GOOD

SEEKERS after the great Truth, the supreme Reality, have spent their lives in seclusion, meditation, penance and spiritual practices and have ultimately attained the light of Realisation, and thus illumined they have broadcast this light of God-consciousness, the path that leads beyond sorrow and bestows upon us the gift of immortal, eternal bliss and infinite knowledge, the greatest attainment of man. We have to strive to attain the knowledge, knowing which all things become known. To obtain that great fruit of human existence, obtaining which one knows that there is nothing greater to be attained is the grandeur and glory of human life. In order that we may fulfil this object of human life, we have to acquire Mumukshutva,—the thirst for the knowledge of the Eternal and to translate this knowledge into an active quest—,so that we may realise the great aim as tangible experience in the depth of our consciousness. We have to acquire the fundamental knowledge of the various practices upon the path of Yoga, the path of knowledge according to Vedantins, the Ashtanga Yoga of Patanjali according to the Mystics, the path of devotion or love as expounded by Narada or Sandilya in their Bhakti Sutras, and the path of attaining Truth through

worshipful, dedicated activity, *i.e.*, the path of Karma Yoga, the Gita-Dharma expounded by Lord Krishna in the Srimad Bhagavadgita. The seekers have to turn their faces away from the Preyo-Marga*, which satisfies only the sensual nature of man, which is not his real nature and which does not ultimately lead to one's eternal welfare, and they have to make up their minds to take to the Sreyo-Marga†, which is the difficult path of light, which is not the sensual one, which needs sense-control, mastery of the mind, Viveka and Vairagya and which leads to our real and lasting welfare. That which may be unpleasant in the beginning, but which leads to eternal welfare, is the path of Sreyas. A beautiful distinction between the two paths, Sreyas and Preyas, has been given in the inspiring Kathopanishad, where Nachiketas boldly rejects that which is pleasant and takes the difficult path which ultimately leads him to blessedness. So we have to be seekers following the Sreyo-Marga, and also we should have the unique good fortune of a safe shelter at the feet of a Mahapurusha, a great Soul who has scaled the highest peaks of inner spiritual realisation and is established in the consciousness of God-vision, in the Consciousness of the Highest Truth.

* "Preyas" means that which is pleasant to the senses and the mind. Hence "Preyo-Marga" means the path that leads in the direction of the pleasing sensations of body and mind.

† The word "Sreyas" has just the diametrically opposite connotation to the word "Preyas". Thus "Sreyo-Marga" is the way leading to one's ultimate good and not to an immediate pleasant condition of senses and the mind.

GOAL OF HUMAN LIFE

THREE things are very difficult to obtain in this mortal world,—birth as a human being, desire for liberation, and association with the wise ones,—and they are obtained only through the blessings and grace of God. Of the three, human birth is a very precious gift that has been put first and foremost. It is that state of existence where alone the *Jiva* (individual soul) becomes endowed with intellect and the extremely rare faculty of discrimination,—*Nitya-Anitya-Vastu-Viveka*. Therefore, human birth is put down as a very rare gift of God. Having got a human birth, if you do not have a yearning to attain that state which will bestow upon you eternal bliss and immortality, it means that you do not utilise this human birth to any purpose at all. Then your existence becomes patterned as of the animals. Eating, drinking, sleeping and enjoyment of sensual pleasure are common to both man and animals, but that which distinguishes man is his idealism, his earnest desire for attaining something higher than mere material existence. We know that there is a higher thing to be attained and we have also a keen desire to become free from the imperfections of this physical life. Then comes association with the wise. Even after getting the first two,—human birth and desire for liberation,—our life becomes clouded in an illusion, and in unfruitful endeavour, because we do not know what is right endeavour which is given only to that blessed man, who has the third gift,—association with the wise—which obviates the obstacles on the path. If we surrender ourselves unto the wise preceptor he would show us the path. He would be able to give us inspiration,

enthusiasm and courage, when temptations beset us on the path. Those who have been endowed with all these three blessings require a fourth also, *viz.*, a mind which says "All right". There is no devil except the uncontrolled mind of man. It is the representative of Maya, Mara or Ahriman—something that stands as an obstacle in the path of God-realisation. So the mind should be propitious. You may have *Devakripa* (grace of the deities), *Gurukripa* (grace of the Guru) and *Sastrakripa* (grace of the scriptures), but without the co-operation of the mind success cannot be ensured.

SPIRITUAL PROGRESS AND GOD-REALISATION

WE HAVE to progress day by day towards the highest ideal and therefore, it is a very blessed day and a very auspicious occasion, when we start regular Sadhana upon the theory and practice of meditation in all its aspects and spiritualise all our activities. We do meditation in the morning and evening, but during our activities and dealings with others in the day, we show petty-mindedness and selfishness. This obstructs our Sadhana and nullifies the benefit of our meditation. Penelope, the wife of Ulyses, had during her husband's absence many suitors, but she did not want to become the wife of any one of them. She was a faithful and loyal lady. She therefore told her suitors that she was preparing a robe and until it was finished, she would not accept anyone. They agreed. Every day she went on knitting and at night she used to undo all the work she had done during the day. This continued till Ulyses appeared. A similar thing should

not happen in our life. Whatever we might have practised in the morning and evening, to that we should not add an undivine element. If during our actions we forget our essence, if we are harsh, if we criticise, if we are dishonest,—all these things will undo whatever Sadhana we have done in the hours of meditation. Therefore, our external physical life and activity, our speech and actions have closely to keep up and further the spirit of our meditation, worship and Sadhana. In order to do this, it is very essential that we not only confine our Sadhana to a few quiet hours, but we should also divinise all our actions during the day. All our actions should express our real, inner nature. They should all become spiritualised. It is this divinisation of all activities that is taught in Karma Yoga. Everyone must know this, whether he is a Dhyana Yogi, Bhakti Yogi or a Vedantin. Karma Yoga is very difficult. You can have a very ideal Bhava when you are alone; but when you come into clash with hard realities in the world of diversities, to keep up harmony, to express only divinity, selflessness, is a hard job. But it is worth the while, because it will make other Yogas fruitful. The man who lives an ideal life, full of self-sacrifice, full of sweetness—one Mala of Japa that he does is equal to ten thousand Malas done by other people, because his nature is purified by divine activity. But if your nature is full of Kama and Krodha, even if you do meditation, as the field is not prepared, it will not be fruitful. One wonders: "Why am I not progressing?". Because you are contradicting your Sadhana in your active life. An aspirant must be wise. He should know where the pot is leaking.

Otherwise when the pot is leaking, you will be trying to fill it. It is useless. First you must know where the pot is leaking. For this, you have to know the art of Karma Yoga.

You must have a practical knowledge of these things. Once a king had three skulls, and he asked his court-Pandit as to which of them was the best. The Pandit passed a rod through one ear of the first skull, and the rod came out of the other ear. In the second skull, the rod when inserted through one ear, came out of the mouth. In the third skull the rod, which was inserted through one ear, went right into the heart. The court-Pandit said that the third skull was the best. The first skull represents that type of people who hear words of wisdom through one ear and without assimilating them leave them through the other ear and forget about them. The second skull represents those people who after receiving wisdom, are anxious to teach it to others, but do not practise it themselves. The third skull represents the best type of aspirants who, after hearing wisdom, keep it in their hearts and try to practise it in their everyday life. So, I would request you all to be like the third skull, cherishing and practising whatever you may learn from the wise.

The Pranava or OM is repeated to recall to ourselves our real nature. It is to remind us what we essentially are. We think we are this body, this mind or this Prana. The Pranava reminds us what we really are. Om is eternal, unfathomable Peace. Light of lights, Knowledge, Satchidananda, Nitya Suddha and Nitya Buddha. That is what we really

ure. But the indescribable illusion of the Lord, called Maya, has made us forget our real nature. We therefore say that we have pain, when the body has pain. When the mind has no peace, we think that we are depressed. It is due to wrong identification with the body and the mind. Therefore, in order to enable us to realise the true nature of the Self and to be established in the Atmic consciousness there are different Yogas. The utlimate purpose of all Yogas, of all spiritual struggles, is the realisation of the true Atmic consciousness which is full of bliss. So Om reminds us what is the ultimate experience to be gained. Experience of Om is the ultimate fruit of Yoga, and to constantly keep us reminded of this goal, we always repeat Om, which gives us elation. Even though for ages you may be under illusion, at the touch of Truth you will be filled with elation. That is the grandeur of the perception of Truth.

The secret of Yoga is not merely Tyaga (renunciation) of Bhoga (pleasures), but it is the attainment of Mahabhoga, Bhoga of Bhogas. A Yogi knows that if all the pleasures of the three worlds are heaped together on one side and on the other side an infinitesimal speck of that Supreme Bliss of the Atman is kept, the latter will far outweigh the former.

The man who does Tyaga of sense-pleasures for the sake of Yoga is indeed a clever man. It is like throwing away a counterfeit coin for getting gold. He knows that he is throwing away nothing, and what he is going to attain is something unique. So, Yoga is primarily an attempt to achieve the Supreme Bliss. That is one definition of Yoga from a

particular point of view, and we have other definitions also. There are positive and negative definitions. A child is watching the mother sewing. It sees the mother putting a thimble on the finger. "Why are you putting the thimble?", the child asks. Then the mother explains that it is put on in order that if the needle happens to prick the finger accidentally, it may not cause pain or bleeding. We try to apply that to Yoga also. And a little more elaborately I will tell you. Far, far back, beyond history, there was felt an ancient need for man at the beginning of creation. What was that? It is very emphatically given in the life of Buddha. The whole of his philosophy is Nirvana. He found all people suffering. Therefore, in order to fulfil a need, he strove. Even so, long ago the ancients went through the human life itself and found that all life is full of defects, full of pains and this started an agitation in their mind. They enquired: "Is there any way of getting over these imperfections and limitations? And is there any way of going beyond these sorrows and tribulations?" They found that ultimately the body is subjected to six kinds of variations. It has birth, growth, then change, disease, decay, and ultimately death. When human life is bound by birth and death, in between these two terminals, there is this suspension of life. So in this uncertain life of man what little pleasure he can get from objects is obstructed by disease, change and decay. Is there any method of getting rid of this imperfect earthly life? The ancients were very practical people. Even now the true Hindu is a very practical man. Though he is charged as an imprac-

tical unrealist, it is an interesting fact that he very practical. When he thinks that a thing worth striving for, he is prepared to sacrifice h very life for it. The Hindu found that the extern life is not worthwhile, and so he was prepar to give it up. People thought that he was a dream Is there a method of getting rid of the imperfectio of the world? The practical mind of the Hindu once began to make researches. By persistent effo he ultimately plunged into the very depth of hum thought and experience and came face to face wi Truth beyond sensual experience. Beyond all so row and limitations, beyond all bounds, and getti That he dived into an ecstatic experience of Supre Bliss. So, from the heights of his experience he ga the call to the mortal world: "In brief I will t you that path which will lead you to eternal w fare. I shall teach you that path which will lead y beyond sorrow".

From an observation and close study of hum life and the vexations, pains and afflictions that set it, there arose an urge in our ancients to f out a path that would make them transcend the They felt an extreme urge to find out an unblemi ed life and as an answer to this human want ca Yoga, the practical method to take you beyond s row, and bestow upon you perennial bliss. It effe *Sarvaduhkha-Nivritti* and *Paramananda-Prapti*— removal of all sorrows and the attainment of greatest bliss,—not mere Ananda, but Paramanar Supreme Bliss. So Yoga came as a consequence

imperfections, all limitations and impurities and this material, physical existence and would bestow upon him the fruit of higher consciousness where he would experience infinity, peace and eternal life of perfection.

Viewed in this way, the other questions become automatically answered. Why should we study Yoga at all? Who will not like to be completely free from all imperfections and vexing bondages of this material existence? Who will not want to enjoy supreme bliss and ecstasy? If anyone does not want it, he is a fool. He is a blind fool who wastes away his life. He is a man to be pitied. He sets his eyes like an owl and says: "I do not want light". When there is a method to go beyond sorrow, it is not a sign of wisdom. "Oh, what a surprise! In this mortal world rejecting nectar, people consume poison!"—that is what a wise man will feel if rejecting Yoga one takes to Bhoga. So, this is the importance of Yoga. It takes one beyond sorrow and bestows upon him perennial bliss, the experience of Atmic consciousness whose nature is bliss.

Even a little bit of knowledge of Yoga bestows upon us great inner strength because man finds his centre. So, it is the great way of life—path which fulfils the main purpose of human existence. As such, everyone must be interested in Yoga, because all people want to get rid of sorrow and want to get peace and bliss.

FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPT OF YOGA

As already stated, Yoga came into being as an answer to human need, when through experiences

in life, the ancients found out that human life here is limited and it is not full. It is Apurna. There is always some sense of want in the human mind, some sense of incompleteness which man wishes to fulfil. The satisfaction which the human being derives from external physical objects by means of his senses, the eyes, ears, sense of taste, sense of touch and the sense of smell, is accompanied by much pain and sorrow. First and foremost, the hankering is there. As long as a desire is not fulfilled a person has no peace of mind, and then exertion starts in order to fulfil that desire. If the exertion ends in failure, he is disappointed. If some one crosses him when he is exerting to fulfil a desire, he gets angry. If any other man has got that which he has not got then jealousy comes. After an object has been acquired through much exertion and overcoming all obstacles, fear starts in his mind that the object may get out of his hand. Then the anxiety to keep the object safe arises. Anxiety and fear—when these two are there, no peace can be there. After these exertions, fear and anxiety, if the object goes out of his hand, sorrow comes. If once the mind gets attached to an object, immediately desire starts. Exertion, anxiety, fear, disappointment, sorrow—all these follow. The mind never gets rest. The very nature of the mind is desire. Constantly thoughts come and they are at once helped by imagination, and imagination takes the form of a desire. Then will-power comes into play. It gives orders to the various organs—the hands, feet, etc.,—to fulfil the desire. From memory thought comes, and thought at once with the help of imagination takes the form of a desire. And, once the desire is there,

the mind is at once at work: 'How can I fulfil it?'. Now the 'I' or self-arrogating principle comes there. Then the determining faculty appears. Then action, exertion, anger, jealousy, fear, anxiety and disappointment follow. Disappointment comes because in imagination our conception of an object is one thing, but when we actually get it we find that it falls far short of our expectation. The reality is different from our conception of it. This is the case with ninety-nine per cent of our experiences. Conception is one thing and the actual experience is another thing. And at the end we realise that all names and forms are perishable and all relationships are temporary. When the objects leave us, or we leave the objects at the time of our death, we experience sorrow. We must try to get beyond sorrow through getting rid of our desire for sense-objects by subduing the Indriyas. How to subdue the Indriyas and how to free ourselves from the tyranny of the mind is taught in Yoga. Yoga is the method to enable us to go beyond the experience of sorrow, anxiety and disappointment and to take us to the highest spiritual experience.

Let us see what are the fundamentals of Yoga, why it is that the mind goes towards objects and why desire is the nature of the mind. Is it possible to stop the process of the mind? These are the next considerations. The ancients tried to find out what was possible for man to do with this thing called 'mind', through which so much sorrow, and other limited experiences result. How did they set about doing it? What is the fundamnetal thing that is being worked out through Yoga? Here we have

to consider the state of the human being. They found that human being is a curious mixture of three ingredients. We all know what we are. We think. We make use of our intelligence, reasoning and logic. Man is a rational being. So we know ourselves as human beings who can think, co-ordinate experiences, infer, and come to fresh conclusions, and who are endowed with intelligence. But then there are times when certain urges get hold of us, and we immediately forget all about our intelligence and logic and we become very much like an animal. When there is a violent fit of anger or jealousy, we behave like any other animal. It shows that there is in the composition of every human being some part which is subhuman, unrefined and absolutely animalistic, though through centuries of refinement, man has evolved and due to mass-evolution of the race the subhuman part has been to some extent subdued.

When a man is under the grip of a violent fit of anger, he may go and murder a person, which no man in his normal human consciousness would do. Then after sometime he himself is aghast and thinks: "Could I do such a thing?" When the human faculty or human restraint is blown off, then the subhuman element takes full control of the personality. This happens to everyone. And our ancients found out that this is also a fundamental part of man, but it is only suppressed in some human beings. Where the race has not evolved, this element is very active even now. Take the case of the aboriginals in Africa. They are just like animals, though they are in human form. This portion of the human personality

is called, in theosophical language, the lower self. In Tantric language they call it 'Pasu', and in Vedantic parlance they call it 'Asuddha Manas' or impure mind, which is characterised by Mala, the animal characteristics. This Asuddha Manas is there in every person, sometimes under control and sometimes not under control. All the while we have to remember that the real man is not the body, mind or the intellect. Actually man is a Spiritual entity. He is immortal in essence, full of pure Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. That is the true nature of man—*Satchidananda.* His real nature is not like a piece of stone. He knows: "I am that I am". The bliss of Self-awareness is the fact of man's being. Being-Consciousness-Bliss is the definition of the real Self of you all. But this consciousness is covered by the mind and the senses, and man says: "I am doing this, I am full of sorrow, I rejoice". He identifies himself with the body and the mind.

Man is constituted of three ingredients. There is his essential divine nature; then there is the animal nature full of Tamas, darkness and bestial qualities, and in between these two there is the human nature. Sometimes, when he is in the company of saints, pure feelings come. At other times, when he goes into bad company, bad feelings come to him and he feels like getting out of the place. Man s tossed about between his pure self and impure elf. There is on the one side the pull of his highr divine self, and on the other side, the pull of his ower, animalistic self. His own bad habits, friends, nvironments, etc., tend to keep him on a lower tate. So, the fundamental problem before Yoga is to

somehow or other enable man to liquidate his lower self, the animalistic and gross nature. Every time the human element says: "I must go up", and the lower self pulls him down. Purification is the purpose of Yoga, so that there may be no bar for the Divine Consciousness to manifest itself. The Divine Consciousness is experienced when the mind is purified. When the mind is fully purified, we can partake of that wonderful experience of the ever-blissful Self, which is our true essential nature. They call it Svarupa, which means "one's own nature". This being the problem, it stands to reason, that Raja Yoga must also work out the process of eliminating the impure side of man and training the human self to rise up to the Divine Consciousness and all Yogas do the same thing in different ways.

According to Vedanta, Mala, Vikshepa and Avarana are the three obstacles that hold the Jiva in bondage. Anger, hatred, jealousy, selfishness and passion are impurities of man, and these centre round his identification with the body. So, the first thing is the removal of the gross, physical personality. The second obstacle is Vikshepa, or oscillation of the mind. The mind is never able to concentrate on or stick to any single point or idea. The mind always flits from one thing to another one. Now it is in Canada, now in Germany, now in America. This flitting nature of the mind is called Vikshepa. So, Yoga-Sastras say that if you want to purify your lower nature, you must also get rid of the Vikshepa, and even if that is done, there is the primal delusion, the veil, the Avarana, on account of which you think that you are the physical

body. *That subtle illusion* or wrong notion, called Avidya which hides the true nature of the ultimate Reality is called Avarana. Anything that hides is Avarana.

Patanjali said: "If you want spiritual progress, first and foremost, purify your nature and remove all the undesirable qualities". So, as the very first step in Raja Yoga, he laid down the cultivation of all virtues. The aspirant must become the very model of virtue, perfect Sadachara. This is the basis over which all the superstructure is to be built. How many vitrues are there? If you read Swami Sivanandaji's books, you will find hundreds of virtues, which are to be developed by the aspirant. Sage Patanjali solved the problem in a very intuitive way. He selected five fundamental virtues which are the parent and the prolific source of all goodness. If you become firmly established in these five fundamental virtues, all other virtues will come to you by themselves. If you capture the *commander* of an army, the whole army is at your disposal. So he *said: "Cultivate the five fundamental* virtues. Become *perfect* in them. Then your *entire nature* will become virtuous. That *is the power of these* virtues."

Cultivation of these five fundamental virtues constitutes the first step of Ashtanga Yoga. They are called Yama. Of them the first is Ahimsa, harmlessness. Never *hurt any creature,* not even an ant, not even a plant,—not only physically, *never even* think of hurting anyone. Never *cause sorrow,* never cause any loss and never cause any injury *to anyone.* Never dream of causing any fear or *any sorrow to*

any living creature. This one virtue is enough to make a man perfectly virtuous, a saint. The second is Satya or truthfulness. Be perfectly established in truth. Even life may go, but do not go against truth. Do not subscribe to falsehood. Do not do an action that contradicts truth. Do not think one thing, speak another thing and do a third thing. Then comes Brahmacharya or purity in motive, speech and action. It is chastity from the point of view of ladies. The fourth is Asteya or non-stealing. Never try to take that which belongs to others. Never covet your neighbour's wealth. Never deprive another man of what rightly belongs to him. If all nations stick to this, where is the need for quarrels and wars! The last is Aparigraha or non-receiving of articles of luxury. Do not receive any thing from others that is conducive to luxury.

Thus the first step of Raja Yoga aims to make the individual perfectly virtuous. Harmlessness, truthfulness, purity, non-stealing and non-receiving of that which is conducive to luxury—these form the fivefold virtues to be cultivated by the seeker in the first stage of Raja Yoga. A life of universal love and selfless service will establish him on the pattern of saintly life which will serve as the foundation for the building up of the later stages of Raja Yoga.

YOGIC ANALYSIS OF THE INNER MAN

MAN is defined as a rational animal. That part of him endowed with the power of reasoning forms his human nature and this is the centre of his personality. Urging him to a higher state of conscious-

ness is his essential, ever pure, ever perfect, divine nature which is unborn, undecaying, imperishable, of the nature of immortal existence, which is his real being, and which continues even after the cessation of the functioning of the mind. When one life-span comes to an end at the dissolution of the physical body, all mental processes of the individual come to an end and all sensory processes based upon the thought-process also come to an end. We find that even after one's mind ceases to operate, the consciousness, the real part of the human being continues to be and spiritual researches by sages of intuition have revealed that this unit of consciousness continues to travel along a chain, link by link. Human incarnation being a link in the chain, all doubts regarding the continuity of consciousness after the dissolution of the body and cessation of the mental process were set aside conclusively in two ways. The memory of previous birth in an individual was found active and the data or facts given in connection with his previous existence were put to test and proved to be correct in every minute detail. In the West, the continuity of consciousness has been proved by certain research-workers upon a somewhat lower scale, who were able to contact personalities after the dissolution of their physical bodies. Among some of the foremost figures who established the continuity of consciousness we might mention Sir Oliver Lodge, etc. They were very well-known figures in Western literature and amongst Western thinkers. This essential part of man is defined as a thing ever calling him higher up towards noble aspirations, towards struggle for the attainment of a higher consciousness in whic

established in an experience where sorrows cannot touch him and pains of the physical and mental sheaths cease to be. A state of continuous bliss characterises that experience. At the same time we find that on the other side of the central human, rational nature there is the grosser aspect of his being, the brutal, animalistic aspect, made up of the low appetites, the lower sensual passions and the impure urges that form a part of every human being.

The world-process is the evolution from the lower stages of being to the higher levels. Indian thought holds that as the individual unit of consciousness passes through lower stages of existence, the impress of each stage is left in the depth of consciousness and this forms the constitution of his animalistic nature or his impure, grosser being. Thus each level of existence leaves within him some trace of the characteristics of that stage of gross existence. In the animal stage, the predominant characteristic is instinct which is present in the form of urges over which the being has no control. They are not guided by rational thought and therefore these elements go to form the lower part of the being. The animal is subdued and suppressed in the consciousness and the divine yet to be awakened and it is yet latent, not patent. In between them is the human nature, ever active, dynamic, expressing itself in various modes in the life of the individual, but swayed between the animal and the divine nature. Every being is forcibly drawn towards the suppressed yet active animal nature. Animal nature is active in various degrees in each human being, whereas the divine has not started to be active. It

is sleeping and not yet awakened. So, the individual is constantly drawn towards the animal nature.

Human life is a struggle between the undivine nature of the individual and the power of reasoning which says: "I think this is not worthy of me. As a human being I should not do it". These considerations are kept active by the human reason How? By the force of early training. In the child-stage he is trained by the elders to avoid doing certain things and to be ashamed of doing certain other things. Early training and family heritage play an important part. Suppose he is born in an educated, cultured family; naturally, his instincts are more refined. The reason offers lesser restraints to those who are born in an uncivilised family, very backward, unlettered class. Even though they are endowed with reason, it does not operate in the same degree as it does in the case of a man, born in a civilised, cultured family. Early training, heritage, and later on his previous Samskaras begin to operate.

Samskara means impression left over by every past experience. Life is progression and in each birth man goes on learning things and drawing lessons from experience. All these lessons are there in the form of subtle impressions in the human being. It may be a liability or it may be an asset in the form of impressions carried over from experiences and activities in a previous birth, and these impressions begin to operate with the ego or individuality which begins to function in a human being after a certain age.

In one's childhood individuality does not function. Normally, it is only after a certain age that

children begin to manifest their individuality, and when they do so, the impressions of their previous births begin to work. They also begin to play a part in the reasoning of man directly, induce him to take to certain actions and to avoid certain others. Then we have the restraint of a civilised society. People say: "Do not do this". Certain things are disallowed. Certain things are looked upon as something to be abhorred. These influences go to make up the rational part of man and it is a struggle between these factors and the lower urges that makes up the conflict in every individual. The factors of self-respect, decency, etc., begin to operate in a man and they act to a certain extent as a restraint against the urges of his grosser animalistic nature. And supposing he comes into contact with the higher mind, begins to hear words of wisdom, comes into contact with elevating literature and hears more and more about divine things, then his intellect begins to be educated. The power of restraint over the lower self becomes stronger and establishes him more and more upon human nature. And he becomes a man of self-restraint, self-discipline, a man who has mastery over his lower appetites and urges. In society, the factor of fear also does act to some extent as a bar upon the mind's lower appetites. Suppose a man acts badly, he will be punished by the society. So, fear of punishment is there. In the higher planes of evolution the fear is not from the world, but is from punishment of Universal Law. All these things go to make him steadily fixed to the human level and act as a check upon the too frequent manifestation of the urges

of the lower, grosser, impure, animalistic part of the human being.

And then, of course, there are occasional clashes. Suddenly, certain moments come in the life of every human being, when he or she begins to ponder over his or her life: "Have I lived to any purpose? What is the meaning of all this? After all one day I shall have to go out of this scene at a moment's notice". Then he or she feels a sense of dissatisfaction upon the type of life that he or she has been leading and a call comes from some high source. There is an urge for betterment, for rising higher up and for experiencing something which is not merely mundane, gross or physical. At those times man becomes a philosopher and tries to rise above his sensual life. But again in the whirl of his daily activities he forgets the real purpose of his life. Once again moments come in his life when he questions: "Is there a higher purpose in life?". It is indicative of the presence of a higher nature in the being which is capable of being experienced and realised. It is to enable man to take advantage of this upward wave and rise up from the normal humdrum activities of this physical world that all God-men constantly keep on urging him, saying: "What are you doing here? How long will you slumber?". They try to rouse again and again the sleeping, essential divine nature in the human being. Thus analysing the threefold nature of man we find that in the process of Yoga, the fundamental work it has to achieve is the annihilation or elimination of the lower, animalistic nature of man and the sublimation of his human consciousness in-

to a higher divine consciousness where he goes beyond the body and mind and is established in the perennial, glorious experience of his blissful, true Self—his essential nature—the Truth that shines in the innermost chamber of his consciousness. If this is the process, then all Yogas, however much they may differ in their external modes, are necessary to work out this self-same process.

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Now we will try to consider how the different Yogas actually work out this one central process and in what way they set about doing this. We find that man expresses himself through his speech and actions. Whether a man is good or bad and whether his life is good or bad, can be known only from his speech and actions. When a man is very animalistic and impure, he does atrocious acts. All his actions are impure, sinful, harmful. He brings pain, sorrow and destruction to others. In his speech he is harsh and brings about disgrace upon people. He insults and causes pain to people. Thus through harsh, cruel and wrong words and actions the Asuric nature of man manifests itself in the human plane. All manifestation is through action and speech. But, the Yogins and Seers of the past tried to go beyond the actions and the speech of man. They said: "These speeches and actions are more in the form of manifestations of something deep inward and we should therefore first of all know whence they spring forth".

Trying to trace the actions and speech to their source, they found that they were rooted in thoughts. It is only what man thought and felt in the mind that becomes later on expressed in the form of

speech and action. Speech and action, though of tremendous import in the external world, work havoc or wonderful good upon the external field of human life; they are nothing but the outward symptoms of an inner power and this power is the power of thought. The wise devoted their full attention and all their wisdom and found that they were confronted with a very mysterious and complicated array of factors in their mind. All those arose in their mind; and therefore a study of man's mind is the most important work of Yoga.

Analysis of man's mind, minute research into the various aspects of the being of man, how the mind acts, what are its various moods, what is its essential constituent,—all these form the subject-matter of Yoga. They found that mind thinks due to various factors and its manifestations also depend upon various factors. Now, actions and speeches were traced to their geneses. "Why is it that a certain type of thoughts comes in a mind and not another type of thoughts? What is the thing that sustains thought?" They began to make deeper and deeper research and came to marvellous discoveries. What were they? They found that thought was not totally haphazard. I will give you some very easy examples which will reveal to you some laws that operate in the realm of each one's mind. What are these laws?

For instance, if you see a doctor, immediately the thoughts of dispensary, hospital and medicine come. If you see a soldier in military-uniform, the thoughts of warfare, tanks, guns, soldiers charging —all these things come to your mind. If you see

a lawyer, the thoughts of courts, judge, sentence and jail—all these come. There are two things involved in this process. One is we find out a law that any object perceived by the avenue of any one of the five senses immediately sets up a train of thoughts which is of the same nature as the object perceived. One thought sets about raising in the mind other thoughts associated with it. It is called the law of association. And this law even dispenses with the necessity of having an object present before your eye for setting up a thought. Just from memory you think of something. Immediately that also sets into motion a train of thoughts associated with the object conjured up in the mind through memory. The wise thus found that the law of association is there operating in the realm of mind and directing our thoughts.

Another very interesting law was also found out. They found that mind has got a peculiar, I may call it, a very dangerous and nasty habit. It is a headache for all seekers. It has got this pernicious habit of making a lightning record of whatever sense-contact that a human being makes. In passing you may speak some words, see some persons or you may undergo some experience and immediately a lightning record leaves a Samskara. Why it is very important to the Yogi is due to the very peculiar nature of the Samskara. Samskara is not merely a dead-line drawn upon a canvas, but it is a live record. I shall explain to you what a live record means. There is a photographic record. Anything that comes across a sensitive plate, immediately creates an image on it and it is kept for ever;

but that is only a dead impression. That image which a photographic plate has taken upon itself cannot come and talk to you. But then, this Samskara is an impression taken by the mind which has got in itself the capacity to once again recreate in the individual the entire experience which originally caused it. It is a very important aspect of the nature of a Samskara that gets into the human mind through any chance contact or activity or experience that the individual happens to go through.

Each Samskara has inherent in it the capacity to once again recreate that very experience which originally caused it. You will understand it perfectly if I tell you an analogy in our external life. Out of a big tree we get a small seed as a product of that tree. The tree is vast but the seed is very small. But what then is the tremendous capacity of the seed, even though it looks so small? It has got nherent in itself the ability or the power to once igain recreate in all fullness and in all details the ntire tree which originally brought it about. Given roper conditions and favourable factors for it to pring into dynamism, this little seed can once again ecreate in entirety all details of the tree which was he cause for its coming into being. Thus it is rith Samskara.

Supposing someone gives you something to aste. The actual taste is only over an area of two r three inches on the tongue. Before the thing omes in contact with your tongue there is no taste. You experience the taste only as long as the thing is on your tongue. Yet this little experience is immediately captured and kept in the mind as a Sams-

kara. Supposing you happen to pass through that particular city or town where ten years ago you happened to taste that thing, then the memory comes: "In 1945 I ate this thing, and I ate in that particular locality". Suppose you are sitting somewhere. Once you think of it, you begin to imagine how beautiful it was and how it melted in your mouth. This starts a sensory reaction and this imagination immediately makes the Samskara take the form of a desire.

First the Samskara lies as a Vasana and the Vasana rises as a Vritti and mentally the whole process is recreated. This process of recreation through the power of imagination crystallises as a desire. And once desire arises, man at once tries to fulfil it. He becomes a slave of that desire. If a desire comes, trying to fulfil it is the nature of the human being. Immediately the ego-sense says: "I must take it". The ego also identifies itself with the desire. But if the ego has the higher discriminative part, instead of identifying with desire, it tries to identify itself with the higher discriminative faculty *viz.*, the Buddhi which says: "I do not want this". But normally the ego is not endowed with the faculty of discrimination and it identifies itself with desire and gives orders to the various senses. Immediately you look into the telephone directory and see the number of the shop where you can purchase the things you want. If you succeed in finding the number, you at once place an order over the phone. If you cannot find the number of the shop, you get a taxi and go to the shop, sit there, order for the dish and taste it. The experi-

ence is once again recreated. This experience leaves another Samskara or intensifies your old Samskara.

Samskara is very dynamic. We must note the importance of being very careful not to take in any new Samskara. The process of Yoga demands the frying of Samskaras. Put a seed in a frying pan and roast it over the fire. Supposing you sow the seed in the soil. It will not sprout forth, because the life-principle has been completely roasted out. So is the case in Samadhi wherein Samskaras are fried out. I am talking to you about only one Samskara which is so very powerful, whereas there are countless thousands of Samskaras. Everyday from morning till night we go on accumulating sense-experiences, whether we are aware of it or not. Everything that we experience is turned into a Samskara. Every moment of our waking life, we go on acquiring Samskaras. Therefore, the wise say that it is impossible to kill all the Samskaras one by one. If you drop an atom bomb, thousands of people will be killed simultaneously. Similarly the weapon they gave is Samadhi, the experience of superconsciousness, which they say, will fry once for all, all Samskaras, so that they cannot recreate the experiences which originally created them. The frying of the Samskaras is the method of the Yogins, and this is brought about by intense meditation and with the annihilation of the Samskaras, man is freed from bondage. This is the process of Yoga. This was one of the discoveries which the Yogins and Seers of yore made in the research of the mind. The whole of Raja Yoga can be said to be "the method of frying the Samskaras of the mind".

We have to touch upon some more general points which relate to the mind, and their role in keeping of this phenomenal illusion. We shall see how the mind holds down the consciousness to this limited individual sphere, and one more law of thought, and also the anatomy of thought, how it works and how it crystallises. It is a very important thing. We must know that thoughts do not merely dwell in the mind concerning themselves with the inwardness of man only, for they have definitely a powerful and substantial effect on his outward life in all his spheres. In all spheres of his activities they become crystallised as tangible parts in his personality. Not only that, persisted in, they have got even the power to become objectified externals, as certain different conditions and certain definite experiences. So, it is necessary that we should be careful about our thoughts.

We must know what to think and how to think. We may know what is good to think; but we may not be able to hold on to that thought. Some other thought which we do not want may yet persist in coming and occupying our consciousness. This is a common experience and a universal law for people who have not begun to realise that they are something different from their thoughts. If they want they can be masters and can propel the thoughts in any direction they wish. Man should know the truth and feel himself: "I am one thing and thought is another thing which is not part of my essential nature; it is something that I can move and it is not always necessary that I should continue to be moved by it". Until and unless man becomes aware

of this truth he is always led by his thoughts. At present it is not you who propel thought, but it is thought that propels you. Therefore, we shall try to understand in what way thought operates inside and in what way it affects man's life also.

The third point is unity of Sadhana. We have found that the root-cause of all this bondage to the lower, grosser, animalistic part of man's nature is wrong thought,—thought which persists in conforming itself to the lower nature,—and we have found out how thoughts based upon these primary negative qualities of desire, anger, passion, avariciousness, selfishness, jealousy and attachment, keep up the structure of man's lower nature and having gone to the root of thought, we have seen how our ancients found out that the first concern of Yoga is to gain complete control over thought and bring about a complete transformation in the nature of man. If the mind is in a state of allegiance to the lower self, then it will not be able to play its part in raising our consciousness from the lower to the higher, but if it is allied to the Self, then it becomes an effective and proper channel for the rise of consciousness from the lower level to the subtle spiritual level; and therefore, they made a *study of* the mind and its mysteries.

The transformation of the mind is the prime concern of Yoga, and we have found that if this transformation from the impure to the pure, from the finite to the infinite and from the gross to the subtle and spiritual has to be brought about, then all Yogas must of necessity work out at least an identical process in the very essence. Now, there-

fore, we will see how unity of Sadhana is present in the four Yogas which apparently in their outward form seem to be diverse.

According to the theory of Vedanta the prime cause for this individual existence is Ajnana or Mula Avidya or root-ignorance. The very first form this root-ignorance takes is the feeling of duality in the non-dual Supreme Consciousness which is characterised by absolute unity. Then comes the feeling, due to ignorance, that 'I am separate and the world is separate'. This duality comes due to what is known as Adhyasa or superimposition, and wrong identification.

The consciousness instead of identifying itself with the Cosmic, the Infinite, identifies itself with the individual limited body. This is the first manifestation of Avidya. 'I am this body', 'I am this mind', 'I am this feeling', 'I am this thought',—is a series of identifications rooted in the first primal error that 'I am a separate thing'. This first dual notion sets in its train a whole set of wrong Adhyasa and then due to this the error of superimposition. You superimpose upon pure Consciousness various forms, and various characteristics which are not there as its essential nature, and therefore, the whole phenomena of Jagat (world) spring up.

First there is Ajnana, then arises duality and then wrong identification with body, mind, etc. And this ignorance is based upon mind's wrong thought and therefore, the process of right thought is given out as the powerful entity to reverse the process. Swami Vivekananda has referred to it in terms of

modern hypnotism. He said that the 'being' has hypnotised itself into the wrong thought that he is a body. You have to stamp out this hypnotism. He says that Vedanta is strong dehypnotisation through right thoughts and right discrimination. You should dehypnotise and this is the correct method. The whole of Vedantic Sadhana is based upon right Vichara. To do Vichara you must know the correct discriminatory process. You must first of all learn what is Reality. Then only you can think on the lines which will take you to the Reality. So, they first of all prescribed the listening to the nature of Truth. This, as you know, is part of Vedanta.

One has to go on discriminating and holding on to the correct current of thought and Vedanta provides you the frame-work through which you have to make your thought currents flow towards Truth. You do this actual work in Manana and at the extreme climax of Manana, you have got deep meditation. You have various kinds of supermental states of consciousness known as Samadhi. You have got Savitarka Samadhi, Nirvitarka Samadhi, etc. When all mental processes come to an end you have the highest Advaita or Nirvikalpa Samadhi, Then you are once for all freed from the thraldom of ignorance. When the mind stops functioning, there can be no wrong experience. This is the inner process of Vedantic Sadhana. Instead of identifying yourself with this physical personality you identify yourself with the infinite, formless, supreme Truth in your innermost being.

But this thought also manifests itself in various

other phases. Thought when expressed as emotion, gives rise to various wrong attachments, Moha, affections, love directed towards the perishable objects and love towards one's own body and those associated with one's own life. This Moha is another factor which binds the Consciousness to the limited nature of wrong feeling and emotion. Due to Moha 'mineness' comes—feelings such as 'my house', 'my child', 'my property', etc. Therefore, the wise have another method for countering this aspect of the mind's wrong manifestation—wrong emotions, wrong ties and wrong affections. For that, they evolved a process of detachment and attachment,—detachment of the entire emotional aspect of one's personality from worldly objects and attachment to some perfect divine personality. This is at the basis of the conception of Bhakti and Ishta.

Instead of wrongly being attached, through emotion and feeling, to a number of perishable things in this world, purify your emotion, have Vairagya and attach yourself to some divine, all-perfect personality, through your entire emotional power. Let all your love be centred upon the perfect divine ideal, a divine personality. This is another process of purifying the mind and feelings by slowly weaning away the mind from the external objects of the world and keeping it completely fixed on the all-pervading divine personality. This divine personality, which a devotee chooses is known as Ishta-Devata.

Those who have got a single ideal as for instance, in the Christian world, do not conceive of the Supreme Reality in various aspects. They have got

only one aspect, the Father in Heaven, and the vast majority of Christians are Bhaktas. They are lovers of the Lord. Even in such people who have got a single Ishta Devata you will find that the urge of the human nature is irresistible. They like to love Christ as the ever-perfect bridegroom; some offer their adorations as Christ on the cross and they like to take upon themselves the sufferings He underwent. Some would like to love Lord Jesus in the arm of Mary and they are not so much attached towards the adult Jesus. Even so some would like Jesus as their Master as He lived and moved amidst the world with his disciples. Therefore, the various aspects of the one Divinity attract the love of different devotees even in the self-same religion according to their temperament and inclination.

Just like that, in order to give an unlimited scope for the transformation of man from the lower to the higher level, Hinduism has given an infinite number of manifestations and Bhavas, emotional attitudes. We are now concerned with the approach to the mind purely upon the emotional side, and therefore, the wise have given different Bhavas to enable a smooth switch over from the attachment to the human, to the transcendental, divine. If your love to the Lord, is like the love of a parent towards a child it is called Vatsalya. There are other Bhavas: Sakhya Bhava—you can love the Lord as your own friend. Arjuna had that Bhava, and Uddhava also had that kind of love. Or, the love of a layman and devoted servant can also be transformed into divine ideal—say, the servant-master aspect. All the affection in the field of emotion and feeling in

the mind can be transformed into divine love through this technique called Bhakti Yoga.

There is another thing; mind also appears in man as various complexes. Different people have got different complexes brought about by association with various things. Suppose you are associated with a beautiful body, you have then got the feeling: "I am very handsome" and you feel a sense of superiority. Suppose you are associated with wealth, you feel: "I am a rich man" and you look upon with contempt those who are not having wealth. Suppose you are associated with a lot of information, suppose you are a lecturer or a professor, this also brings about a superiority complex and you feel: "I can teach others". If you know music, if you know boxing,—anything you know, at once gets crystallised as Abhimana. You may have a superiority complex of birth, wealth, learning, strength, beauty, influence, high post—all these are called Abhimana. It is a most terrible bondage for the being, for all these complexes have got their direct connection with the body. Therefore, you can never get out of the bondage of Abhimana.

Vedanta goes to the very root and destroys the body-idea itself, but for those who are not prepared to go to the highest Vedanta, and who are caught up in these whole host of Abhimana, the method is to crush all these. How? By becoming absolutely humble. Throw away all these ideas and feel yourself one with the commonest, the simplest and the humblest. The process of reducing oneself to the commonest, humblest and simplest, is completely giving up all Abhi-

mana. This is done through a wonderful technique called Karma Yoga. A Karma Yogi should never take work from others. He must wash his own clothes and sweep his own room. He must not be ashamed to carry heavy loads. Feel that you are nothing. If you want to remove Abhimana, you must do all things which the lower mind does not like to do. So Karma Yoga is the war declared against Abhimana. If an old woman is not able to take a bundle, a Karma Yogi will immediately go and take that bundle. An ordinary man will not do it due to Abhimana. He will not salute another first. Constantly rub the Abhimana.

Gandhiji was a super Karma Yogin. He said that whoever went to Wardha, for the first three months, should take up the duty of cleaning the latrines. In India the lowest work is considered to be the cleaning of latrines and it is that class called untouchables who are given that job. If you touch them, you should wash yourself. Even in America people in high society will not mix with lower class of society. There is a barrier due to social strata and wealth. It is also farely high in England. Do a task which you think lowers your dignity, because to make yourself a cipher, you should reduce all superiority complexes. It makes you simple, humble and gentle and it expands your heart It makes you feel oneness with all kinds of people. That is the preparation for the expansion of consciousness into the still higher stage, and in a purified mind the Sattvic thoughts of divinity come. Some people hold that Karma Yoga is itself an in-

dependent Yoga, while others think that it is only an auxiliary Yoga.

In Raja Yoga, Sage Patanjali has said, you have to counteract Ajnana by Vichara. You try to root out each one of these deep-rooted complexes by completely trying to humble yourself through Karma Yoga or motiveless service. Service is always considered to be a lesser man's work for the higher man. Therefore, do the lesser man's work, simple, dedicated, motiveless service. Christ showed it in a wonderful manner. He washed the feet of his disciples just before the last supper. Patanjali has also said: "The mind attaches itself to wrong and perishable objects; why not therefore completely stop this mischievous fellow?". We have to completely stop him working. Then what can he do? Therefore, switch off the main switch at the power house. All the vagaries of the mind will come to a stop.

VRITTI-NIRODHA

EVERY process of thought has its root in the activity of the mind. Because the mind is active there arise feelings, emotions and all types of wrong perceptions. Therefore, stop the activity of the mind. I have told you what the very first manifestation of the active mind is. A ripple arises in the mind-lake. Afterwards imagination arises and then desire. The first and foremost thing is a mere idea. That is the simplest projection in the mind-stuff. simple thinking devoid of any bias. It is only when imagination and egoism are attached to the idea, the whole process arises. Idea as such has no

power. If you go and attach yourself to it, it will become an effective mischief-maker. The wise have said: "Completely inhibit all ideas. Do not allow even a single ripple to manifest itself in the mind-lake. Make it absolutely calm, without a single Vritti. Stop the primal manifestation of the mind itself". Therefore, the first Sutra of Sage Patanjali is *Yogas-Chitta-Vritti-Nirodhah*—Yoga is the inhibition of the modifications of the mind.

When the mental processes are completely stopped, the superconsciousness is given a chance to manifest itself. The favourable condition necessary for the manifestation of the higher consciousness is absolute stillness of the mind. So when the highest consciousness arises in Samadhi all Vasanas are fried. This analogy is taken out of the experience in the physical world. Every seed is a potential tree. But if you fry the seed and then put it in good soil and water it, it will not germinate. Yoga says that Vasana is fried in the fire of Knowledge. Sage Patanjali went to the very root of Adhyasa. He said, stop this mischief-maker once for all. And Raja Yoga gives the technique of completely stopping the activity of the mind. Therefore, you find that all these Yogas attempt to tackle the mind in its different aspects,—different aspects which hold down the individual consciousness firmly to this wrong lower self. And these different aspects are suited to different people in whom some one or other aspect is predominant. Swami Sivanandaji has said that you should not be *lop-sided*. As you do Raja Yoga, you should keep up the other Yogas also as accessories. Swamiji advocates the synthe-

sis of Yogas. You should have all Yogas, Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga, Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga. You will find this unity of Sadhana very beneficial. All the various Yogas try to work out the same process of transformation of the mind from a state of nescience resutling in wrong identification, activity and emotion, to a higher state. The approaches are different in respect of the different individuals in whom some aspect or the other is predominant.

Every thought that is entertained gains strength and creates in the mind a tendency for the repetition of that thought. If you think a thought, the natural tendency of the mind is to think it again. Any thought deliberately held in the mind at once demands repetition, and whatever thougts you think they tend to become manifest as actions. If you hold a compassionate thought, it somehow or other makes you do a compassionate deed. If you hold a sensual, gluttonous thought, it forces you to perform a sensual, gluttonous activity. An angry thought will want you to do a harsh action, and a passionate thought will force you to do a passionate action. Any thought tends to make the individual perform a corresponding type of action. This is the second thing you have to understand.

Action once done also tends to repeat itself. That is the habit of action. Actions if repeated become a habit in man. Unconsciously you begin to follow that particular type of action. Habit is the third phase which takes place by holding to a particular type of thought, and by your habits your character becomes affected. Character moulds your destiny. Thus, from thoughts arise actions, from

actions habits, from habits character, and from character destiny. So you see the importance of holding to the right type of thought. You should carefully remove all thoughts that are inimical to progress and inner unfoldment.

YOGA SADHANA

MIND is the arch enemy of the *unfoldment* of spiritual consciousness. It is the mind that acts as the greatest barrier in its various aspects, as craving, Vikshepa or unsteadiness, etc. If the mind is absolutely steady, the light of the Atman gets itself fully reflected. Ahamkara, the self-arrogating little personality never allows us to realise our essential nature. The process of remembrance (Smriti) is also a great obstacle. Avichara Buddhi *along with* the above various aspects of the mind taken together, is a great slayer of the Atman. The Atmic consciousness is not allowed to manifest itself. There is an irresistible tendency for thought to become translated into action and every action becomes a habit in the nature of man, and when habits are constantly indulged in they become part and parcel of his nature.

All behaviour of man is based upon character. Every Karma becomes fruitful seed for reaction later on. As he lives, he builds up the whole superstructure *of Karma* which becomes his destiny. So we find how the thought of man governs his destiny and also the importance of selected thought, right thinking and the avoidance of wrong thinking. We also find how in the science of Raja Yoga, the ultimate technique is aimed at the stoppage of all func-

tions that are the root activity of the mind. But already we are in the grip of its wide ramifications in the form of likes, dislikes, imaginations, fancies and thoughts. Therefore, before we proceed to the root, we have to destroy these ramifications. Suppose you want to give battle to a lion; first of all you have to travel in the jungle and ultimately come to its den. Chittavritti is the den of the lion of the mind and you have first to cut all its manifestations in the form of jealousy, Kama, hatred, etc., and the whole host of wrong actions which are caused by wrong thoughts have to be corrected. It is a process of narrowing down the range of our attack until we come to the target.

In order to cut the mental functions in its extrovert far-flung manifestations, Sage Patanjali took up the exposition of Raja Yoga and did it in a very scientific and methodical way. Apart from man's nature as a rational being with a gross lower self pulling him downwards, there is his essential spiritual nature, and in between, we have the *Buddhiyukta Manushya,* one who is capable of thinking being endowed with a mind. So in the centre is the being endowed with thinking capacity as distinguished from the world of subhuman species which cannot think.

Apart from the result of the study of man in his essential nature, Sage Patanjali made a study of man as he is actually composed and he arrived at the above conclusion. He made the study of the universal man, not a Hindu or a Mohammedan, but the man constituted as he is all over, when he is created upon earth and will continue to be till the

last day of his existence. He found out that, first and foremost, he is of the nature of pure Existence essentially. *Man is the Spirit essentially.* He is a spiritual entity, and this is evident to everyone who thinks. The ultimate principle in man is his Being. No one can imagine his own non-being, for if you have to imagine your own non-being, there must be an imaginer to imagine that, and therefore, the imaginer is the ultimate Being. The ultimate undying principle of man is Being. He IS. I exist. I am pure Existence, pure Being, Kevala Sat, and this essential portion of man is the fundamental part of his personality. Patanjali then found that this fundamental fact is somewhere inside, whereas the first thing that appears to man when he sees another man is his physical being.

Our experience of a human being is only a certain shape, appearance and features. So Patanjali said, there is the physical, gross sheath of man. That is one aspect of man and within this there is the thinking man. There is the mental aspect of being, the mental sheath. Ideation occurs, thoughts come, and the being begins to think and out of the thought the body is made to act in order to give expression to the thought. *The entire life of man is an expression of his thoughts*, and these expressions are in the form of various actions, and so there is the thinking man. He said that in between these there is a link. Between the thinking man and the acting man there is the power to act. There is a peculiar invisible, internal electricity, as it were, which makes a man act. This power which animates the human being, without which *all the*

senses will be absolutely incapable of any activity, is Prana Sakti. The eye sees through the power of Prana. The ear hears through the power of Prana. The tongue speaks through the power of Prana.

At the time of death when the Prana is withdrawn, the process of departure commences. Death means the flying away of the Prana from the body. So actually we are all moving and talking corpses only. When the Prana goes away, we will become absolutely immobile, because the Prana is moving the body, is acting, eating, enjoying, etc. All this is due to Prana Sakti. This is the third aspect of man, and behind it as the mover of all, is the pure Self, 'I am'. But a peculiar confusion has occurred. You have got yourself identified with the mind, and you have thought yourself to be part and parcel of the mind, though in rare moments unconsciously you assert your unattached, witness-nature. When you say, 'My mind is restless', you unconsciously admit you are one and the mind is something which you possess. So you are different from mind when you make such statements as: "My mind is restless", I cannot control my mind", etc. These are the spontaneous expressions of your real nature. So, physical body-sheath, vital Pranic sheath and the mental sheath—these three aspects of the being are temporary, passing, superficial and the non-essential aspects of the being, and the essential aspect is Being itself. You are yourself the pure Existence, unborn, eternal and ancient—*Ajo Nityah Sasvatoyam Puranah*. Long before the mind manifested itself You were. The study of man as he is in reality, as a centre of pure Being covered up by mind-sheath,

Pranic sheath and the grossest physical body-sheath, made by Patanjali, discloses a graded method. It is a very well-thought out and a very scientifically invented method.

RAJA YOGA

Now, how many Yogas are there? There are infinite number of Yogas. Anything that frees you from sorrow and gives you real bliss is Yoga. There are various practices but essentially Yoga is one, and the several practices are there in order to suit people of different capacities and tendencies. In order to suit the different temperaments and aptitudes, the ancients have prescribed different paths. These paths are not antagonistic to one another. This is the first thing to be born in mind, and consequently all these paths ultimately work out a self-same process. You may get the number ten by adding three and seven, or four and six, or five and five, or in some other way. The resulting number ten is the same. Even so, the process of Yoga may apparently differ on the surface, yet inwardly the central process, which they work is one and the same. And what is that central process? The wise say there is a veil which hides the Reality. It is called Maya in relation to the Cosmic Being, Isvara, and it is called Avarana in relation to the Jiva or individual soul. The individual soul gets circumscribed in an individual consciousness. When this veil is removed, it realises its identity with the Supreme Soul. To remove this veil is the purpose of Yoga. Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Raja Yoga do the same thing. They take a particular aspect of man and through

that enable the Jiva to realise its identity with the Supreme Soul.

Man is endowed with intellect, emotion and the mystic faculty of introspection, and the Yoga that suits a particular person is in measure to that particular faculty which is predominant in his nature. If the intellect is predominant, the path of knowledge or Jnana Yoga is resorted to by that seeker. If emotion is the predominating faculty, the approach to the Reality is made through Bhakti Yoga, the path of devotion. If the occult faculty of introspection is predominant, then Raja Yoga is made use of. Raja Yoga is also called Dhyana Yoga. Karma Yoga is common to all. Whether you are a Jnana Yogi or Dhyana Yogi or Bhakti Yogi, Karma Yoga is necessary. The secret of working in this world without getting attached to the fruits of action is Karma Yoga. Anasakti (non-attachment) is the secret of Karma Yoga. It is Anasakta (unattached) Karma that releases you from all bondages.

Raja Yoga is for those who are of mystic and inward temperament. How do we proceed in it? In Raja Yoga there are eight distinct stages. Therefore it is called Ashtanga Yoga. Ashta means eight and Anga means limb. In Jnana Yoga, in the beginning there is a stage where the Sadhaka should acquire the necessary qualifications, *the Sadhana-Chatushtaya*, the fourfold qualifications—discrimination, dispassion, the sixfold virtues such as control of mind, control of senses, endurance, etc.. and lastly a keen and intense longing for liberation. Equipped with these qualifications you have to ap-

proach a Guru and hear from his lips the nature of Reality. This hearing is called Sravana. Then you should reflect over what you have heard. This is called Manana. Then you should ceaselessly contemplate on that. This is Nididhyasana. Just as there are these steps in Jnana Yoga, in Raja Yoga there are eight steps or limbs. Hence it is called Ashtanga Yoga. It is also called Patanjali Yoga, because Patanjali was the Sage who expounded this Yoga. Raja Yoga is the most scientific and logical of all Yogas. Hence the term 'Yoga' generally refers to Raja Yoga. Yoga Darsana means Ashtanga Yoga of Patanjali. By tradition it is called Raja Yoga. In fact all paths have to culminate in meditation. Because of the great importance it attaches to meditation, Raja Yoga is also known as Dhyana Yoga.

The eight limbs of Raja Yoga are Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. Out of these, Yama, Niyama, Asana and Pranayama are the preliminary stages. The Yoga proper starts from Pratyahara or abstraction of the mind and the senses. Yama is the cultivation of certain virtues. Niyama is the following of certain daily observances. Asana is the acquisition of perfect steadiness of pose and Pranayama is the discipline, control and regulation of our gross physical breath, which is connected with the inner subtle nerve-currents. Pratyahara is the withdrawal of senses and mind from the external objects of this universe, and Dharana is the fixing of the mind on the object of meditation. Dhyana is mastery over Dharana, and continuous, unbroken fixing of

the mind on the object of meditation. Dharana is sporadic, but when you have attained mastery over Dharana, you are able to fix your mind upon the object of meditation steadily for a long time. In the depths of meditation, you transcend the lower, physical consciousness and you experience the highest superconsciousness. This is called Samadhi.

Here, you should make a distinction between the Asana of Hatha Yoga and the Asana of Raja Yoga. The Asanas in Raja Yoga are not the Asanas (of which there are about eighty-four lakhs) taught in Hatha Yoga. The Asana in Raja Yoga means any one steady pose which is required for the practice of contemplation. The purpose of the Asanas taught in Hatha Yoga is different. In Raja Yoga the definition of Asana is *Sthirasukhamasanam* —holding of the body in a steady and comfortable pose. Any comfortable pose in which you can keep the body steady for a long period of time is Asana. It is laid down that if a Yogi has to take up Pranayama, Pratyahara, etc., certainly he should be able to sit in a steady pose at least for three hours. Thus, we have to distinguish the Asana in Raja Yoga from the Asana in Hatha Yoga.

Raja Yoga helps us first to control the gross, physical body, and then step by step it leads us on to the control of subtler sheaths—the Pranic sheath, the mental sheath, the intellectual sheath and the bliss-sheath,—and takes us to the eternal, ever-perfect Self which is beyond all these sheaths.

Thus the approach is made starting from the

most external, the physical body and proceeding to subtler and subtler bodies, and so, Raja Yoga is a very scientific and logical method of inner purification and self-perfection.

YAMA

SAGE Patanjali first tackled the body which is most external. You find that the external gross physical manifestation of the mind is in the form of the activities of the body. Therefore he says, "All right, I have to remove the impurities of the mind. For that first of all, let me try to close up the effects. Let me suppress the symptoms". He says that the cause is kept up by the play of the symptoms. The functions of the mind are fattened more and more when you give expressions to them in the form of actions. The real thing is to control the mind, yet the wise experience of Patanjali during his meditations was that actions also react upon thought. Every time you act, you strengthen the thought. Thoughts gain momentum when they are taken up to their logical conclusion—external act. At least stop its grossest physical manifestation. Of course, the perfectionist would at once raise the objection that there is no use of suppressing action and that the actual thing is to change your mind.

But it is not so easy a job. Directly controlling the mind is very difficult. Mind does whatever it wants to do. Whatever fancy it takes, it is made into action. First of all put a number of checks.

Where it tries to manifest itself as activity say 'No'. Declare a war against the mind in its most external manifestations. The various resolves and vows which appear to be foolish for the unthinking man who says that transformation of the mind is real Yoga, may not be useful for one who has transcended the stage; but we cannot afford to disregard them in the initial stages. We who are on the threshold should know that these things are as important as the next stages. Supposing there is a ladder where the rungs are so placed that you cannot just manage to avoid any rung. If you say that you do not want the first rung, you will always be on the ground.

The mind is very deceptive. It will bring in subtle excuses. It will bring philosophy: "I have passed that stage in my previous lives. It does not matter if I take five cups of tea and go on eating meat". One who says like this is a slave to his tongue. He cannot give up eating meat. What is giving up of meat? It means you assert your mastery over your mind. If you say: "I will get up at 4 a.m. and take bath in cold water", it all means a continuous process of again and again asserting the superiority of your spiritual nature over the pull of your unreal lower nature. You cannot all of a sudden separate your higher spiritual nature and the lower material nature. In order to separate them, you have to observe spiritual vows. But one must remember that giving up certain things that you like alone is not Yoga, but such practices are important for the attainment of real Yoga. Therefore, Sage Patanjali said, "First of all put a check on

your external nature". At least control your physical actions, if you cannot control your desires all of a sudden.

Everyone knows that the physical action has got the greatest effect on mind. You can go on thinking about certain indulgence, but the shock that is given back on the psyche by actually putting into action the indulgence is the greatest. The shock through an imagination is not so very great as the shock given to the psyche by the actual action. Action becomes a concrete part of man's memory and agitates him much more than mere thinking, fancying or imagining. Therefore, Patanjali said, first of all purify every activity and put a check on all of them. How to do it? He said, take certain vows and conform your conduct to certain universal laws. What are they? They constitute the Yamas. Take up a vow that I shall act according to the laws of truth, non-injury, non-covetousness, non-stealing, etc.

There are five Yamas. Why only five, why not ten? Why not some other number? This is also based upon wisdom and experience. He found that if the five fundamental universal laws are made to prevail in your life, then all the other lesser good qualities will come to you of their own accord. He calls these five fundamental virtues as universal vows, i.e., vows which should be observed under all conditions, at all places and at all times. They are Ahimsa (non-injury), Satya (truth), Brahmacharya (celibacy), Asteya (non-stealing) and Aparigraha (non-covetousness). The resolutions taken and the

aspirants' struggle to observe these vows will be found to have their effect of putting a stop to almost all wrong activity of human being. All unrighteous actions are due to either falsehood, dishonesty, cunningness or due to greed, impurity, lust, passions, or due to cruel nature, harming others, or causing loss to others. In this way, all the actions of a bad or wicked man will be found to pertain to one or other of these evil qualities—falsehood, cruelty, lust, greed and the tendency to deprive others of what belongs to them. So this is the conclusion of Patanjali. He asks the aspirants to stop all external manifestations of evil thoughts in the mind, evil motives and evil feelings, and see that their actions are made to conform to these five great universal laws of love, truth, purity, absence of greed and non-stealing. In these, he first laid the foundation for bringing about a thorough transformation of the lower nature of the mind, and freeing it from its outermost manifestations. From the circumference he goes to the centre.

We have found how external discipline is very necessary, because it has got a very great influence on the mind. If evil thoughts arise in the mind, the duty would be to inhibit the actions which come as their result. You know if a particular muscle is not exercised, it shrinks and becomes atrophied. Just like that, the physical action of the mind becomes atrophied. So a habit is formed. If a thought comes, the mind goes to the action constantly checking the senses, and this habit acts as a sort of Nirodha. Nirodha means something that checks. You make use of the pernicious nature of mind it-

self to counteract it. Counter the bad actions by good actions. This is Yama. This is the first stage in the attack directed against the lower mind for subduing it.

AHIMSA

THE first of the Yamas or restraints is the practice of Ahimsa or non-injury. Two important points are to be borne in mind in this connection. Firstly, note that Ahimsa is not just non-killing, but, it means non-injury, indicating thereby that it is entire abstinence from causing any pain or harm whatsoever to any creature. The second point is that Yamas constitute universal vows. They are not conditioned or limited by class, time, place, circumstance, etc. The earnest aspirant should adhere strictly to them at any cost at all times. Their practice is not to be regarded as occasional or as a matter of desirable policy, but they are to become all-important principles dominating your life.

What is the special importance of Ahimsa in spiritual life? Why is it given the first place in Yamas? What are its true implication and significance? To understand this, you consider for a moment what is the meaning and purpose of spiritual life and Sadhana. Sadhana is the process of transforming the imperfect, limited human personality into the original unlimited splendour of perfect Divinity. Man has a lower animal nature, a human nature and the latent essential Divine nature which is his true Self. Spiritual life is the conquest and subdual of the animal nature and the sublimation of the human into the Divine nature.

Now in the light of the above, consider what is the *chief characteristic* of the brute animal? It is ferociousness and cruelty. Therefore, the very first step in the conquest of the lower animalistic self in man is the eradication of this base, horrible propensity. Even the most civilised, most cultured, educated, refined and polished of people have this trait in them. *Ladies, too!* Even the so-called high class or aristocratic folks have this *streak of sadism* in them. Harshness and ill-treatment towards children by parents, servants by masters, daughters-in-law by mothers-in-law, wives by callous husbands, etc., are universally prevalent in modern society. Anger is the *form and medium* it expresses itself through. Therefore, Ahimsa or the vow to abstain from causing the least pain in thought, word or deed is prescribed by Maharshi Patanjali as the best and most efficacious means of eradicating this animal *propensity* from the nature of the aspirant.

Besides, the attainment of Divinity *means* the development and manifestation of the Godly nature. Daivi-Sampat or Divya Svabhava is to be cultivated. God is *love. Love perfectly* and entirely excludes all giving of pain or doing of harm. Thus violence and cruelty are *totally incompatible* with love. Santam, Sivam, Subham is the nature of the Divine Being and hence Ahimsa came to be regarded *as* the highest *of* virtues—"*Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah*". Hence it is given the first place among *the five items* under Yama in Raja Yoga.

To turn away a beggar with a harsh *refusal* from *your* door is breach of Ahimsa. *To* thoughtlessly disappoint a person after giving him a defi-

nite promise and hope about some matter, is breach of Ahimsa. Slighting or showing deliberate discourtesy to a person before others is wanton cruelty. All harsh and rude speech is Himsa. To make another commit harm or even approve of another's cruel action is breach of Ahimsa. To fail to relieve another's pain or even to neglect to go to the help of a person in distress, too, is a sort of Himsa. It is the sin of omission. Wounding the feelings of others by gesture, expression, tone of voice and unkind words must be given up entirely if you are earnest in the practice of Ahimsa and really serious about your Sadhana and if you truly and sincerely want quick progress and attainment of eternal bliss and Kaivalya. What you practise, do it perfectly. Become embodiments of the divine quality of Ahimsa.

SATYAM

THE second of the universal vows, which Maharshi Patanjali lays down for the seeker to practise is the strict observance of Satyam or truthfulness. You have to be absolutely truthful, if you want to progress towards God, who is Truth. To realise the Truth, one must live in truth. One must grow into the very same form of Truth. Not a partial, but a perfect and comprehensive adherence to truth is, therefore, the second element in forming the foundation of the Sadhaka's life.

As it has already been pointed out previously (in connection with Ahimsa), likewise here, too, you have to remember that these items of Yama have to be followed in a special sense by the Sadhaka or

the seeker after Truth and not in a general Vyavaharic way. To the Sadhaka it is something more than a moral or ethical matter. It is important in a specially significant spiritual way. God or the Atman is the Supreme Sat. Everything other than That, is phenomenon, Asat. To follow truth thus implies the turning away from this Samsara which is Asat and expressing our firm allegiance to Divinity, the real Sat or Supreme Truth. Remember that God is Truth and through truth God can be realised. The practice of truth is the conscious and actual living of the prayer: "*Asato Ma Sat Gamaya*—From the unreal lead me to the Real".

Truth is the law of the entire universe. All things follow this divine law. Each element is true to its nature. Each force in this universe is true to its nature. Each planet is true to its allotted course. Without this, the universe would lapse into chaos. If fire were to give up its heat or burning property, water were to discard its fluidity and coolness, and wind were to stop moving, then think what the fate of the creation would be! Truth, therefore, is the sustaining factor behind all. It is the very core and essence of Dharma which is the foundation of spiritual Sadhana and Divine Life. Hence it is that truth is regarded as superior to a thousand Asvamedha Yajnas. Truth outweighs even the study and knowledge of the Vedas. Being perfectly truthful is, therefore, the most important qualification of a Yogi and Sadhaka.

You should realise fully the extreme importance of this item of Yama. Never swerve from truth.

Have no compromise with half-truth. Many forms of falsification and so-called harmless untruth have become part and parcel of present-day social life. Long usage and convention cannot make untruth a virtue. An earnest seeker who aspires to attain eternal bliss and immortal life should have nothing to do with untruth in any form whatsoever. Flattery is a form of untruth. You do not mean what you utter but shamelessly utter it just to obtain the favour of the other person. Exaggeration is another form of falsehood you indulge in just to create sensation and gain importance. Duplicity and diplomacy are other despicable sins against Satya. Be sincere and straightforward. Be open-hearted. If a truth be unpleasant or likely to pain or hurt another, then gently change the topic or just lovingly keep silent. Ahimsa must form part of truth. Doing dishonest actions must be strictly avoided. Hypocritical conduct, receiving bribes and rumour-mongering are all gross breaches of truth. The way to overcome and eradicate these is by earnest searching of your conscience. Have daily self-introspection and self-analysis. Find out the falsehood in your nature and behaviour. Endeavour to eliminate it. Pray to the Lord for strength in this important Sadhana. Make a firm resolution. You will succeed. You will soon be established in truth.

Truth is like blazing fire. Through truth alone will you be perfectly purified of all taints of the lower nature. Truth is to the aspirant what strength is to a strong man or a *Sandow*. It is a great armour to protect you against the temptations of the world. You can conquer the whole world by truth

alone. If one is perfectly established in truth, whatever he utters will unfailingly turn out to be true. What he thinks also will at once take place. Truth will gradually transform your life into divinity. It is the bestower of Immortality and Bliss.

Live in truth. Be a personification of Satyam. Be true in thought, speech and action. 'Being truthful' means stating a thing as it is, or expressing a thing as it is. The real implication of truth is, therefore, being what you really are. It is manifesting your real essential inner nature, namely, Divinity or Sat-Chid-Ananda or Santam, Sivam, Subham, Sundaram. It does not consist in merely *refraining* from falsehood, but in expressing your *true* nature as described above, in thought, word and deed. To be false to your real Svabhava or Svarupa is a breach of truth.

O Sadhaka! You are pure Divine Spirit. To be pure, to be spiritual is to be *true*. To be undivine, to be impure or unspiritual is to be *false*. Your whole being, your entire conduct and every aspect of your life must manifest only the true Atmic nature. Truth denotes the practising of all the Daivi-Sampat as described in the Bhagavadgita.

O aspirants! If you are really earnest about Sadhana, if you want quick progress in spiritual life and if you are eager to attain the Goal of life, then stick to truth at any cost.

BRAHMACHARYA

WE SHALL now consider a very important item of the Raja Yogic Yama, *viz.*, Brahmacharya or celi-

bacy. Of the numerous laws of the spiritual path, this occupies a unique place of a very special importance and significance. The reason is that it provides the force or the motive power for the seeker's ascent into higher planes. Brahmacharya makes spiritual unfoldment possible. It is to the Yogi what electricity is to an electric lift or electric train. Without it, the Sadhaka cannot progress at all or rise up in the Yoga-Marga or the path of Yoga.

Any movement or activity requires some force or power to animate and propel it. A subtler and superior sort of activity needs a correspondingly subtler and superior force to energise it. Spiritual Sadhana is the highest and greatest form of struggle the human being engages in. It requires tremendous energy and an abundance of nerve-power of a high order. This Sakti is acquired through the earnest practice of Brahmacharya. Warfare with the turbulent senses and the treacherous mind can be successfully carried on only with the strength born out of perfect continence. Therefore, great stress is laid on this virtue in every Yoga, to all seekers, wherever they are, and whichever religion they might profess.

How does Brahmacharya bestow this superforce? It does so through a fourfold process. There is in man a storehouse of mysterious energy. This animates his entire being. This energy resident in the human being manifests itself in two aspects. The gross aspect is in the form of sensual force, continuously expressing itself through the restless Indriyas. The subtle aspect is spiritual in nature

and tends to raise you into higher planes of cons-
ciousness. At its lowest it is carnal passion or
lust and at its highest it is Ojas-Sakti, the radiant
energy that feeds the intense flame of deep medita-
tion of the advanced seeker and Yogi. Brahma-
charya aims at and achieves the refinement of the
physical vital energy and its sublimation into spi-
ritual Ojas-Sakti. Thus to the wise spiritual aspi-
rant Brahmacharya or continence or celibacy is not
a matter of suppression or repression, but is a posi-
tive, dynamic convertive process.

The process is, therefore, a fourfold one of con-
trolling the animal energy, conserving it, then di-
verting it into higher channels and finally convert-
ing it into something altogether superphysical, *i.e.*,
into divine Ojas.

Your energy leaks away continuously through
the senses that are slaves to craving. This wastage
must be stopped. Self-restraint or Dama or Indriya-
Nigraha is indispensable to Brahmacharya. Thus to
the seeker, Brahmacharya does not merely mean the
control over the sexual impulse, but implies perfect
restraint over every sense of his in order to achieve
the conquest of lust. It is comprehensive Dama.
The spirit of Brahmacharya must pervade your en-
tire life and all your actions.

The power gained as you progress in celibate
life must be carefully conserved. You have to safe-
guard it as a precious treasure. The earnest seeker
would rather lose his life than lose his Brahma-
charya. You can conserve it through ceaseless vi-
gilance and sincere Vichara every moment of your

life. Safeguard yourself against the error of foolishly imagining that you have succeeded in getting rid of lust by the mere fact of having lived a single life for a number of years of experiencing a little feeling of serenity or purity.

Sex-energy or lust is the most deep-rooted instinct in man. It is the oldest of factors that have gone into the constitution of the human being. Right up from the earliest stage of evolution through the ages, the instinctive urge for reproduction and multiplication has been kept up by the power of lust. Thus, despite all efforts at controlling and conserving the power, it tries to manifest itself forcibly and overwhelm the Sadhaka. Herein arises the need to intelligently divert the energy by suitable devices into pure channels. Asanas, Pranayama, Mudras, Kriyas, active Seva and pure activity of all kinds help to divert it inward and flow upward. To keep the mind constantly engaged in Sadhana is one of the great secrets of Brahmacharya.

Gradually this energy is converted into pure spiritual energy. It is transmuted through Sadhana. The result of this sublimation is Ojas-Sakti by which the Sadhaka is enabled to do Dharana, Dhyana and enter into deep Samadhi or Bliss-state of Superconsciousness.

You can now realise the supreme importance of Brahmacharya. The spiritual aspirant, who carelessly neglects this all-important Yama never progresses in spiritual life. Sadhana is impossible without Brahmacharya which expresses itself as perfect purity in thought, word and deed. Every thought,

feeling and sentiment of the aspirant must be as pure as crystal. His character must be spotless. Even the least or the slightest trace of sensuality ought not to taint the nature of the Brhamachari. You should be inspired by a positive passion for purity. There must be the burning desire to be spotlessly pure. Even the idea of lust should never enter the mind. This should be the standard that the aspirant should strive to attain.

The conventional conception of Brahmacharya is misleading. In common parlance, Brahmacharya has come to mean bachelorhood. The question is frequently asked: "Are you married or are you a Brahmachari?". This is the degraded plight of our culture at the present day. The glory and the grandeur of the Brahmacharya-ideal have been forgotten. A true Brahmachari is a veritable God upon earth. This is why great ones like Sri Suka, Bhishma, Hanuman and Lakshmana are remembered and worshipped even to this day. Brahmacharya is not mere bachelorhood. To the spiritual aspirant it is deeply significant. It is a virtue that follows from truth. Absolute purity is essentially a quality of divinity. Your real nature is Divine. If we are to be true to our nature and to our Self and manifest this truth, then at every moment of our being, in every breath, thought, speech and action, we should consciously and deliberately strive to manifest this grand aspect of our inner nature, namely, *the perfection of purity.* Thus alone will you be able to get established in Brahmacharya in its real sense. Such Brahmacharya will lead to *Brahma-Sakshatkara* or the realisation of the Absolute.

ASTEYA

In the foregoing paragraphs you have got a ear idea of three important virtues that constitute ıe Raja Yogic Yama. A fourth restraint belonging) this group is abstinence from pilfering habit. It ; termed Asteya or non-stealing or avoidance of ıeft. It may seem somewhat surprising that such n injunction is laid down at all. Who would suppose that stealing could be a common weakness? 3ut, for sage Patanjali to have laid down this restaint, there must have been sufficient reason. This s a widespread evil. How universally prevalent this lefect is will become apparent presently, when we :onsider the different forms this trait assumes in he human character.

Every action by which you appropriate to yourself more than what is actually necessary for yourself, is from strict ethical and spiritual standards a kind of theft really. To eat more than what is actually necessary is considered to be theft. Wanton waste is theft, for thereby you deprive another of something that may be of use to him. Hoarding wealth is theft. Extravagance of any kind, luxury, spending merely for show or to keep up false prestige—all these constitute theft judged from the standpoint of true Asteya. Simple and plain living is the best way of observing Asteya.

Modern civilisation has introduced countless avenues of spending money pleasantly. Right from childhood the youngesters of today want pocket-money for purchases and entertainments. Petty pilfering from the father's pocket or elder brother's

pocket for smoking, cinema, cycle-ride, cricket-match etc., is a common feature. To take away something without the knowledge of others, is applauded as something 'very clever' in schoolboy circles. It is treated as a 'good joke'. Later on as college boys, it is uncommon for youths to dash past the ticket-collector at the railway station barrier muttering a non-challenging 'pass' or 'season-ticket' when there is in reality neither the one nor the other. For a party of collegians to have a good feed at a restaurant and confuse the poor waiter in totalling up the bill is not at all considered in the light of a theft that it really is, but passed off as a huge joke.

The average man in society has no qualms of conscience in passing off a dud-coin in a transaction or coolly pocketing the excess change that a shop-keeper might unwittingly have given. One does not hesitate to obtain a permit for sugar or some coupons for petrol by bribing. Rationed articles are obtained "black" and the dealer turns away a number of poor card-holders on some false pretext. Well-to-do passengers manage to get away their pet dogs without proper railway ticket and also pass off excess luggage by 'arrangements'. In this way the modern man is made. All these actions constitute theft. Every stealthy action which you wish to do and yet conceal from the gaze of others is an offence against Asteya. One who truly believes in the all-pervasive presence of the Almighty Being will never commit anything that savours of stealth or appropriation.

Most of average man's actions are the outcome

of selfishness and greed. The senses hanker after numerous things. You have a great many desires. You keenly wish to obtain many things for yourself. When you cannot get them all and satisfy many of your wants you try to get them somehow or other by sly and improper means. All such acquisition is equal to theft. One should be satisfied with what one gets through perfectly honest and truthful means. One should not desire to possess anything that does not rightfully belong to him. Such a desire itself is the seed of theft. Breach of Asteya is the direct result of your inability to control the craving for sense-enjoyment. When you have powerful Indriyas the uncontrolled mind wants many things; then the pilfering nature enters the mind. Therefore, the real cause of theft is too many desires and undisciplined senses. Desires and sense-cravings blind the ethical sense and blunt the conscience. To abstain from theft of any kind, you must curb your desires, discipline the Indriyas and control the mind.

APARIGRAHA

THE fifth item under Yama is Aparigraha. It is non-receiving of articles of luxury. Only take that much as is necessary for your living—simple living and not sensuous indulgence. Of course, the standard of life differs from person to person. For instance a prince's interpretation of Aparigraha will be something different from that of a peasant. The peasant is accustomed to take simple food, perhaps four Rottis and some Dal. And if a prince also says, "I will also take four Rottis and Dal alone",

he will get dysentery. So you must use *common-sense* in determining what is necessary for your living and what is luxury for you. A man living in the tropics may not need a coat. But to a man living in the frigid zones, Aparigraha means not keeping more than the minimum number of coats. If he refuses to wear coats thinking that they are a luxury, he will surely die. So, you must know in what circumstances God has placed you and know the meaning of Aparigraha.

Stern necessities of life only are to be accepted. Gandhiji in one place said that he who eats more than what he requires is a thief, for he deprives another man of what he needs. One should not keep or try to get in possession anything beyond the very necessaries of life. Gifts from others affect the receiver. As people are extremely selfish, they make presents with various motives. The mind of the receiver becomes impure by receiving gifts. A student of Yoga should, therefore, avoid gifts. Aparigraha removes anxiety to preserve, fear of loss, sorrow in loss, hatred, anger, untruthfulness, stealing, attachment, disappointment, agitation of mind, restlessness, cares and worries. It gives peace, contentment and satisfaction.

WE HAVE seen in the previous pages how important is the purification wrought in Yama, the first stage of the eightfold Yoga expounded by Maharshi Patanjali. Practice of Yama purifies one's nature and establishes him in Sadachara or perfect goodness. Goodness may be enough for success in Vyavaharic life. But here in spiritual life the seeker is of a distinct type, who has set for himself a unique aim altogether lofty and different from the common idealism of the ordinary run of man who knows only the external world, who has got value only for the things present in the world and whose activities are directed towards the attainment of the objects of the world. The worldly man has his gaze outward, whereas the seeker through his discriminating faculty, his intellect, has been convinced that all the vast range of phenomena is temporary and passing. For a short while, they play on the stage of life and vanish. He says that anything impermanent can never give eternal satisfaction. The pleasure which you draw from a perishable object has to cease when the object perishes. When the object is there pleasure comes and when the object goes pleasure also comes to an end. Sor-

row is experienced when your pleasure-centre is removed. The perishable things of this world cannot give you eternal satisfaction. But the seeker is after eternal satisfaction,—not the apparent satisfaction *which utlimately leads to dissatisfaction* but the attainment of something which will bestow fullness. His aim is the highest consciousness of the infinite plenitude where there is no more desire, no more want, and therefore, no more sorrow. Having set himself for that attainment, he thinks that mere *goodness is not enough.* It may be all right for a man for whom the worldly life is his all. To rise above dualities and to have the experience of that *eternal* absolute state and to have Atmic *consciousness*,—for that he is striving and therefore he has to proceed further, not being satisfied with a mere virtuous *life*. All people may adore him and follow *him*, but he has to rise higher. Therefore, *in addition* to becoming saintly and moral, he seeks to *become* spiritual also. His life has to rise from Sadachara to spirituality. That *is his* aim, and therefore, the second, Niyama, is prescribed, which consists of some observances that will lead you further in the spiritual path.

We have found that sage Patanjali has based his approach on a *very scientific* study *of the* composition of man. He has made the study *of the* universal man completely devoid *of* any association of culture or caste or creed or religion,—man as he is, as God created him and *put him on* the terrestrial plane. He made a study in that way and found that man is a centre of consciousness, knowledge and existence, and this central fact of man's being

is covered over by three very distinct sheaths. The first is the grossest physical covering, the body, the most perishable, and the second is the mental sheath which thinks, and from which ideas come and feelings are generated. The whole worth of the life of man is kept up by the activity of the mental man, and the liaison officer connecting the mental man and the physical man, the peculiar force, the animating energy which enables the ideas of the mind to become translated into action, is the intermediate sheath called the Pranamaya Kosa or vital sheath.

So the physical body, the energy-body and the mental body—within these treble layers the essen-al man is caught up, who is of the nature of pure ;eing. He feels himself "I am" and this existence rinciple is asserted and expressed through the ego-onsciousness which is the thing that expresses the entre of man's consciousness. When as an indivi-lual human being he feels, he knows his 'be-ness', ecause he feels 'I am', and therefore when he pro-:eeds to approach the problem of getting at the root of human consciousness, the wrong thought of this body, 'I am this body', 'I am this person', 'this is the world',—this wrong thought is kept up by the mind. In approaching the mind's transformation, he scientifically proceeds from the grossest plane to the subtler until he reaches his essential nature or Svarupa. The ultimate approach to Svarupa is done through deep meditation to the total exclusion of all other ideas. Mind becomes the very form of that supreme Consciousness. By meditating on Satchidananda, 'I exist', 'I am Light', 'I am Bliss', 'I am Knowledge', the mind becomes completely absorb-

ed in that idea. That is given for the awakening of intuition in man, which enables him to know his real nature as he is, which alone brings him face to face with the Truth. That is the ultimate last stage.

The approach starts from the body; and in this scientific approach sage Patanjali first took the external-most aspect of the body in the form of actions. At least control the actions, transform them and turn them to be good. Do not do bad, harsh, destructive acts. So to change the actions, a systematic training to remove from one's nature all the evil tendencies and to replace them by noble, divine qualities, was the very first step of this scientific approach of Patanjali to the problem of Yoga, so that the aspirant will give up his evil nature. That step is called Yama in which we have found included the five fundamental virtues, Ahimsa, Satyam, Brahmacharya, Asteya and Aparigraha—non-injury, truthfulness, celibacy, non-stealing and non-covetousness.

Now we proceed to Niyama—certain *observances* to be included as part and parcel of *one's daily routine*. It consists of Saucha (internal and external purity), Santosha (contentment), Tapas (austerity), Svadhyaya (study of scriptures) and Isvarapranidhana (self-surrender to the Lord). The purpose behind this Niyama is to channelise one's life Godward.

SAUCHA

THE first of the Niyamas is the practice of Saucha, cleanliness, both external and internal. In

the beginning, the condition of the body has got a considerable effect on the mind. Therefore, you have to keep the body in a state of sanctity, so that the mind also may reflect this quality of the body. The body should be purified internally also. You should take pure food. If you eat dirty flesh of pig, your mind will also become dirty.

Our ancients have divided things into three qualities, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. The diet of an aspirant should be Sattvic. Why? Here also it is based upon the experience and discovery of certain laws. All people know that diet has got a direct effect upon the body. The quality of the food immediately affects the body. If you eat very heating things, you may get dysentery, or your eyes may be affected. If you eat things which will produce wind, you may suffer from rheumatism. In extreme type of food, the effect is immediate. If you drink intoxicating liquor, the mind will at once go out of control. There are some foods whose effects are gradual. The quality of the food accumulates in the system and the nature of the mind begins to reflect that quality. So it is more dangerous, because it is insidious, whereas liquor etc., act immediately. So we have to take into account the classification of food into Sattva, Rajas and Tamas and see that the internal purity is maintained by Sattvic food.

Do not take into the body all sorts of impure things, without thinking whether they are pure or impure. Why? Here also there is an important law. 'Sound mind in a sound body' is a well-known adage. There is another saying,

'Cleanliness is next to Godliness'. We, in our lowest stage, are body-bound and however much we may invoke the highest Vedantic thoughts, the primary thought is: "I am this body". As long as this body-consciousness is the dominant factor in our life, so long we have to see that the effect that body has upon the mind is always positive, elevating and purifying. So the influence of the body upon mind is emphasised. Therefore, keep the body clean, then the mind will also become clean. When things that are not pure for the mind come, automatically the mind should feel a sort of repugnance. That is external and internal cleanliness. Of course, throughout Yoga one must use one's common-sense. You must not take the principles of cleanliness into a fad. Common-sense should always be used. Otherwise eccentricity will be the result. The Sadhaka should always be sane.

And now another reason. What is the effect of controlling your actions without minding what the mind thinks? "Let the mind think what it wills. I will not allow it to goad me into action." What is the meaning of it? There is a saying amongst villagers that as long as a tiger or a wild animal has not tasted human blood, until then, it always fears man. It never kills him. It may attack cows, goats, sheep, but it does not attack a man. But, they say, once it tastes human blood then it becomes a man-eater. Thereafter it always attacks man and never leaves him. There is a story.

A man brought up a cub and it grew into a tiger. It was absolutely tame, because it was only

fed upon the food which the master gave. He had never given it raw flesh. Once when the master was sitting on an easy-chair and reading the newspaper, he went asleep and playfully the tiger began to lick the finger of the master. The licking was so strong that little by little the skin was punctured and blood began to ooze from the finger-tips. When the blood began to ooze, it got a taste which it never had before. The master woke up and found that it was drinking the blood and he shouted. After that he found a change in the pet, and it had a peculiar look and within a few days it had to be shot. The mind is more than a thousand tigers, and once a particular action is indulged in, it becomes an inveterate addict to that action. Addiction to action comes in a split second to the mind. Therefore, you have to follow strict rules, regarding habits of living. They are not to be dismissed as being unimportant or superfluous. They are important parts of Yoga.

SANTOSHA

THEN comes Santosha. This conception is rather difficult to be properly understood. Santosha means a habit of contentment and cheerfulness. This is a virtue which is very highly lauded. Contentment is a continued feast. It is said that a king was always so much full of worry, troubles and anxiety about his kingdom and his duties as a king that he said, if he could find one man who is absolutely cheerful, he would pay anything to that man and bring him. He sent some messengers to find out a really happy man. The messengers went in search of such a man. They found a shepherd who

was always singing as though he was full of happiness, and he was brought to the king. He said: "I am satisfied with two loaves of bread a day. I do not want anything more". The secret of his happiness was he was contented with what little he got. This contentment is a very great virtue. It is very difficult to understand what contentment is. Some argue that contentment would put a stop to all progress and that only when man has got greater and greater ambitions, he will be goaded to do further actions and make further progress. But what is progress? Progress in worldly matters will only bind us more and more. This world is a mere valueless husk to be rejected, and therefore, such progress is a virtue which has got no value in the eye of a seeker. For him the sense of value is different. The seeker says that in the pleasures of the world does not lie the realisation of his true nature. The grandeur of Self-realisation cannot be found in all the pleasures of the world put together. The answer given by Nachiketas in the Kathopanishad gives us the true sense of value. What is worthwhile and what is not worthwhile, we should know. "Is it permanent; is it lasting?"—that was the question that Nachiketas put. He said: "I do not want that which lasts for two days and then passes away. I want that which is eternal". That is the criterion which the seeker takes and when he does so, all the pleasures of the world fail. Everything is perishable. He said: "Reject the whole thing; let it go to hell. I do not want it." This is the seeker's attitude. Whatever God has given you be absolutely contented with that. "Why God

has given me this kind of nose?" Never entertain such thoughts. Take a keen joy in having what you have.

You always brood over what you have not got and what other persons have got. It is the greatest trick of the mind to keep you in sorrow. A territory chieftain thinks that he should become a king. A king wants to become an emperor and an emperor wants to conquer the whole world. The beggarliness of the mind can never be satisfied. The world-ruler thinks that he must become the lord of the heaven, and if he becomes the lord of the heaven, Indra, then he will think something else. So, from the highest Brahma, who is the lord of creation, there is only dissatisfaction. But a man who is wearing rags, if he is contented, is happy. So be contented in whatever position He has placed you. Whatever be your abilities, whatever be your talents, whatever wealth you have got, whatever daily needs you get, be contented with them. Then you have got the key to all happiness and peace.

One more important thing. When you get contentment all rivalry goes away. Otherwise you will think: "That man has got that, I have not got that". This jealousy is there. But when contentment is there, you are happy. The spirit of rivalry disappears. Out of rivalry comes jealousy, envy, competition, hostility. If you cannot get what another has got, you at least try to deprive him of what he has got and bring him to your own level. Human jealousy is such that if you cannot rise to another man's level, you want to pull him down to your

level. You make some bad reports about him. So all these things come due to absence of contentment. Contentment gives a wonderful purifying effect to the mind. Mind is rid of hostility and pettiness, and this action which contentment has upon the mind tends to purify the mind. Have serenity which is the essential prerequisite for contentment.

This contentment should not be applied in your Sadhana. There you must have infinite discontent. You should not be content with your devotion, or with your love for the Lord, your development of mercy, etc. You should feel: "I am still imperfect. Where is my devotion?" You should always compare yourself with the great souls who have gone through the agony of separation from the Lord, like Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Ramalingaswamy and others. Their agony made it impossible for the Lord to deny them His Darsan. So in the spiritual field, you should have discontent for your attainments.

TAPAS

WHAT is Tapas? There are so many conceptions, some ignorant and absurd. Some people think that if you stand with one leg raised or one hand raised, that is Tapas. Standing in cold water in winter, standing on one's head, burying oneself in earth—these are considered to be various forms of Tapas. But what is actual Tapas? What is the inner form of Tapas? That is the question which every intelligent aspirant has to understand. People go to foolish extremes by not understanding what actual Tapas is and what actual place it has

in Yoga. Tapas literally means blazing or burning. It conveys the sense of heat and the meaning of something fiery. Taapa is intense heat, and Tapas is rendering the nature of man fiery. Tapas or fieriness—what does it mean? Fire is the most wonderful purifying agent in the world, and it also illumines objects. These two implications of fire you must bear in mind. It burns up dross and purifies everything and it is full of radiance. So Tapasya is actually any intense process that burns up impurities in the nature of man and fills him with the radiance and purity of spiritual consciousness. That is the main purpose of Tapas. It is purification and illumination of a person's personality, and anything done towards this end can legitimately be called Tapas. Tapas may vary from individual to individual. To remove your impurity, you may require one type of Tapas, and another man may require another kind of Tapas; because the impurity of sensual indulgence may differ from person to person. So there is no universal form of Tapas. But certain common forms it takes; because there are certain universal forms of weakness found common to all. The majority of people are gluttonous and they like to take a lot of food. Therefore, fasting is a universal Tapas. Fasting as a method of self-control, as a religious vow and penance, as mortificatory method, is common among all saints, seekers and mystics who strive for perfection. The weakness of sex-impulse, weakness of indulgence or carnal passion, is also a universal weakness. Therefore, a rigid vow of chastity for all seekers forms another common Tapas. Trying to control impure sentiments and

feelings of the mind is also great Tapas. It purifies the nature as nothing else can do. Therefore, Tapas is to control the senses and to burn the fire of purity inside. What about external modes of Tapas? They are indirect means of Tapas. Standing for twenty-four hours without food and drink, if one thinks that it is the only Tapas, it is bad. That Tapas is useful for a man of Tamoguna Prakriti. Intense dynamism is required, if one has to put determined effort. Tamoguna is lethargy, indolence. One who loves comfort can never become a seeker. Therefore, in order to counter this, if you make some fiery resolves, forcing the body to do something which is unpleasant, but you do it as a matter of will, asserting your mastery over your nature, this may be of some utility, but that is not the goal. Fasting for fast's sake is not your goal. Leaving away the things which your mind likes best once in a month, not touching salt during Navaratri, etc., not taking tea for seven days—these are efforts to gain mastery over our lower nature by a determined discipline through Buddhi. The exercise of Vivekayukta Buddhi over the senses and the mind is called Tapas and everything that goes to purify your nature and fills you with Spirit is Tapas. All control of the senses and the mind is Tapas.

Once there arose an argument in the assembly of gods. Some said that Tapas—taking cold water bath in winter, wearing rough cloth, all mortification of the physical body—is superior. And some others said, "No, in Kali Yuga, very superior to Tapas is truth. If you stick to truth God will re-

veal Himself to you. To a man who is absolutely truthful, God will come. Harischandra, Yudhishthira and Markandeya were all votaries of truth". Then there was a stiff controversy. They decided to go to the earth to see the wise people and get their verdict. They all went to Naimisaranya. There the Yogins were discussing spiritual matters. They asked the sages: "Which is greater, Tapas or Truth?" The sages did not reply at once. They consulted each other and astonished the people by saying: "Both are the greatest." Then they explained: "Upon this earthly plane, the greatest Tapas is sticking to truth." If a man attempts to stick to truth, he will know what trials and tribulations it takes him through. If a man sticks to absolute truth, he may have to lose everything and face the worst trials and troubles. So they said truth is the greatest Tapascharya. When they gave this verdict they meant to say that anything that brings you nearer to the Truth, is the greatest penance. It may take any form. It has no stereotyped form. Control of the senses and mind is Tapas. Anything done with determination to acquire mastery over the lower appetites is the very essence of Tapas. If you do Tapas in this manner you will find that every moment the weakness asserts itself, you will have to say: 'No'. If you are sincere and earnest in Sadhana, you cannot escape from Tapas at any moment of your life.

SVADHYAYA

THE fourth Niyama is Svadhyaya. Study is Svadhyaya. It implies study of scriptures, spiritual books

—the source of our spiritual knowledge, the source of religion and the source of divine living and knowledge. These are embodied in all the great scriptures of all faiths. The scriptures contain the revelations of sages who have communed with God from whom they have derived a knowledge higher than the knowledge of physical things. This knowledge they have given in the form of scriptures. All the experiences and revelations and deep inner knowledge derived through meditation and superconscious state have been put down in the various scriptures—the Upanishads, etc. They contain the recorded experiences of the ancient sages who have established themselves in a higher spiritual realm through their determined effort having tapped the Source Eternal or all knowledge. They have given them in and hrough these sacred books. They are the books which reveal the knowledge of eternal verities. They re the books whose declarations hold good for all mes. They cannot be changed. They are not talkg about perishable things. The knowledge of ings of this world changes, because there is a ange in the things themselves. But the great eality is eternal, one without a second and the owledge about It also tends to be eternal. Therere, the fundamental truths which they declared nnot vary. They hold good for all times. The riptures have been further commented upon and aborated by other sages. The different aspects of e central Truth which different mystics experienc- in their own lives, are given out in elaborate deils. India has produced numerous men of God. d each one of them in the different parts of the

country, from generation to generation, has given his own books. All these form the treasure-house which we have and from which we can draw guidance through Svadhyaya. Svadhyaya is the key that opens an access into the vast treasure-house of sublime, elevating and life-transforming spiritual knowledge. They give us the wonderful knowledge of the ways of living in a divine way, so that we can transcend the life in matter. They give us the secret of Sadachara, the secret of spiritual living. All these can never be found in any of the university text-books. How to awaken the divinity within us and how to progress higher and higher towards spiritual development cannot be learnt from books of law, medicine, or books on business, etc. To work out the eternal destiny of your soul, you have to go to books other than the college-texts and other books that fill the ordinary library. You have to go to the spiritual books and the lives of saints. which have within themselves the gems of the truths of life. And therefore, Svadhyaya is a golden key that opens for us the doors of the treasury of eternal wisdom, the treasury of spiritual knowledge which guides the aspirant in the path of perfection and immortal life. That is the value of Svadhyaya.

Let us see what is the psychological value of Svadhyaya and also its practical value, what man can gain from Svadhyaya in his usual life. It has got a very deep and intelligent reason. We know that every experience our mind comes to have, at once takes in the impression of it and leaves a mark on itself. These marks become the seeds, and you know how the nature of the mind changes accord-

ing to the Vasanas that it goes on acquiring. All these things were taken into account, and the sages said that if man is to progress at all and overcome unfavourable Vasanas, some methods should be devised to counter these Vasanas that are coming into his mind in his Vyavaharic life. For countering these Vrittis they have given us Svadhyaya.

Svadhyaya works in somewhat this way. Supposing you drive a nail in a log of wood and you subsequently find that it is not wanted there. Instead of tugging it, you hold another nail and go on driving the second nail. The previous nail will come out and in the same process the second will have gone into the plank. Something like that,— instead of everyday trying to pull out and throw out every single Vasana which involves a lot of nervous energy, you do Svadhyaya. Everyday in the morning and in the evening you try to contact the bygone personalities of different ages, sublime spiritual personalities, whose words have got a power, for they spring out of actual experience. They are transforming words. So you place yourself in direct contact with these master-minds whose living experiences fill the pages of these scriptures. When you read a scripture you forget the material world and you are in a world of ideas springing from experience, and the power of spiritual illumination is behind the words of the sages who have given out the scriptures.

Svadhyaya means, therefore, sitting before the authors of the scriptures—Sankara, Jesus, etc. It is a kind of negative Satsanga. You place yourself

that flows from their words. This is what Svadhy ya does.

Svadhyayanma Pramadah—says the Upanisha Never disregard Svadhyaya. The sages have give us this precious process of Svadhyaya, so that w may have contact with the greatest master-mind That is the great purpose of Svadhyaya. As yo go on doing Svadhyaya, if you deeply get merged i that particular book, your thoughts become complete ly fixed upon divinity. That itself is a sort of Sa vikalpa Samadhi with the feeling of awareness, fo at that time all worldly ideas are shut off from the mind and there is absorption of the mind in the spiritual ideas. As you constantly do this Svadhyaya, what happens? These ideas you take into the mind; sentiment is created by these inspired ideas and your mind is filled with a whole wealth of spiritual ideas. Everyday in Svadhyaya you take in enlightening, higher, inspiring spiritual ideas which give you courage during your moments of depression. Supposing you are depressed, Svadhyaya elevates you, invigorates and gives you everyday the spiritual manna of the soul. It is the food which you take for the soul.

From morning till night you are in Vyavahara. So many ideas and so many Samskaras are formed. So, in the evening you should do Svadhyaya which will drive out all the anti-spiritual impressions and all secular Samskaras. They are never given a chance to stay. So the one practical utilitarian effect of Svadhyaya is the taking in of spiritual ideas, so that the worldly ideas may be clouded by the latter. And secondly, it is a great help in concen-

tration and meditation. How? I will give you an analogy. Now, our aim is to make our mind firmly established in a single spiritual idea. That is the idea in prayer and in all worship, so that the mind can ultimately get itself fixed in one single thought. But the mind always thinks about various undesirable things.

In ordinary unregenerate man, the mind is full of all kinds of sensual and carnal thoughts. All thinking is about satisfaction of the senses only. All thinking is about objects of this world. He does not know whether anything exists beyond what he can smell, touch, etc. Suppose you begin to realise that these are not for your real progress and elevation; then you try to think good thoughts and hold on to pure ideas. Sometimes good thoughts come in, and other times bad thoughts come in. The mind is like a fly which sometimes sits upon good objects and sometimes even upon spit. Thus your mind alternates between the various things. But the honey-bee always sits upon flowers. It never sits upon dirt. So the mind has to be weaned away from the first stage of a fly and then it should be weaned away from the stage of a bee and finally established in a higher position. It is this what Svadhyaya does. It binds down the mind only to elevating thoughts. It does not give chance for the mind to entertain bad thoughts. The mind takes in only what is repeatedly presented to it. In the beginning the mind will revolt. But later on, when you begin to get a taste, without Svadhyaya you do not like to take food. It is an essential part of man. It is food for the real being. When this

habit is formed spiritual ideas only begin to dominate the field of our mental consciousness. That is the deep inner psychological working of Svadhyaya.

Supposing there is a big race-horse costing fifteen thousand dollars. The owner will not allow it to run here and there and take in every kind of food. Only concentrated food will be given to it. Similarly, the mind is a very precious horse. It will take us to Brahmapuri or the Supreme Abode. Supposing the owner does not want the horse to go here and there, he will select good grass. He will take the horse there, drive a peg in and tie it around it with a rope. Here, there is some degree of freedom to the horse. It is a limited freedom. Suppose the rope is about thirty yards long, the horse can move about within a circle of sixty yards diameter. It means that even though it is tied down, it has got freedom to take anything that it likes within that area. That is what Svadhyaya does. If you take to the habit of Svadhyaya, it creates in your mind a new pasture-ground. Formerly, it was limitlessly roaming, but now you give to this mind a confined, selected field for its intake. What happens is by constantly confining it to this frame-work of Svadhyaya, the mind goes on taking the idea contained in the spiritual texts. It does not go beyond these bounds. It becomes habituated to Svadhyaya. This is another aspect of Svadhyaya, which all seekers should understand.

So, we find that it is negative Satsanga. It gives us access to the eternal wisdom, expressed by illumined souls and it brings us into spiritual har-

mony with those people and also gives a new pasture for the mind and acts as a bar to bad Samskaras coming in.

ISVARA-PRANIDHANA

ISVARA-PRANIDHANA is the fifth important aspect of Niyama. It is the highest of Niyamas. And mind you, these (Yama and Niyama) are the starting of the spiritual life. But it does not mean that you outgrow these at anytime of your spiritual quest. When after practising Yama and Niyama you practise Dharana, it does not mean that you can give up Yama and Niyama. Yama and Niyama have to be continued. You cannot remove the foundation when you are building the structure. Yama and Niyama should be continuously practised until you attain illumination. After the aspirant attains illumination he has not to try to practise Yama and Niyama, because they form his very nature. Goodness forms his very nature. All the actions of a realised sage will spontaneously express these things. When a dancer is learning to dance, she has to concentrate upon her steps, but when she becomes a master, she need not concentrate upon them. She need not think about them. She will never take a wrong step. Until that stage they have to be constantly practised. Isvara-Pranidhana means 'placing yourself in God'. That is, ever living in the consciousness of the divine presence, and what does this imply? Even the worst man, when he is before a deity, is humble and his whole attitude undergoes a change. The moment you are in the presence of a higher power, you feel your lowliness. Isvara-Pra-

nidhana implies holding to a constant attitude of worshipfulness, devotion, faith and humility. When you are constantly trying to live with the feeling of the presence of God, you cannot have egoism. It is a very effective method of constantly keeping in check your egoism, which changes your attitude to one of worshipfulness and devotion. Thus it facilitates your going into communion with the Lord. Isvara-Pranidhana aims at the obtainment of communion with God.

These measures are different aspects of Yoga. The actions of a person who feels the presence of the Lord everywhere, become automatically controlled. He cannot do an unworthy act in the presence of God. When you are going to offer your entire life in its inward and outward aspects to God, you will naturally see that your activities, mental, verbal and physical, are kept virtuous, flawless and perfect. Automatically the sincere and earnest practice of the presence of the Lord slowly begins to exercise a powerful influence in the virtuous seeker. The moment you begin to do an act, you feel the presence of the Lord (Visvasakshi). So you are very careful not to do any wrong action. 'I may hide from the mortal man, but I cannot hide anything from the Lord. So I must do nothing unworthy in His presence'—this Bhava is created in the seeker who feels the presence of God always.

There is a Sufi story in which the master tried to inculcate the spirit of Isvara-Pranidhana in his disciples. The Sufi master calls some of his disciples and gives them each a pigeon and says: "Today we

shall have a feast prepared out of this bird. You should kill this bird in a place where no one will see". Each disciple leaves the place with pigeon in his hands for killing it in a place unnoticed by others. After sometime the disciples come back to the master. The master questions each one of them: "Where did you go to kill the bird?" One disciple replies: I hid behind the door and killed it." Another disciple replies: "I hid behind the tree and killed it." At last, one disciple comes back and presents the pigeon to the master. He says: "I was not able to kill it; I could not find a place unobserved by all". The master says: "They all found a place; why you alone could not find a place?" The disciple replies: "Master, wherever I went I found that the Lord's eye was upon me. I was never away from God unobserved by Him. So I could not kill the bird." That was the Bhava. Some sweets are given, with the command: "Go and eat where no one sees." One man comes back and gives it saying: "I cannot see a place where I cannot be seen by God." So the Bhava of the presence of God comes to him who automatically tries to live in the Bhava given in the eleventh chapter of Srimad Bhagavadgita. In that chapter the Lord says: "I will give you the Divine eye, and you will be able to gaze at My universal form." He gives Arjuna the Divyadrishti or Divya Chakshus, and then reveals His Cosmic form. Wherever Arjuna looks he sees nothing but the Lord. In all things of the earth, movable and immovable, everywhere, he feels everything completely permeated by the Divine presence, and this

Visvarupa-Darsana is a clue for complete absorption in the presence of the Lord.

There was a labourer who was illiterate in a monastery. His name was Lawrence. He had been given the sweeping, digging and other menial services. For several years he was working in the monastery as an ordinary worker, and after sometime he was given promotion. He was put in the kitchen and he was washing the vessels. Later on, he was made an assistant cook, and then the chief cook. For forty-five years he worked in the same monastery. Slowly he began to feel a sense of sorrow that while all those monks were spending hours and hours in meditation and prayer, he alone was not able to devote even five minutes for that purpose. He had to wake up before everyone and had to go to bed later than all. He felt that whereas others were progressing spiritually, he was never getting time for spiritual Sadhana. Necessity is the mother of invention. The above thoughts kept his mind occupied. Always he thought: "I am not able to carry on devotion to worship the Lord." This thought constantly made him think of God. "Why, O God, you are placing me in this position?"—he went on conversing with God. He was never able to forget God. He always appeared to be filled with divine spirit.

He who thought he had never time to meditate on God was actually living in the presence of God, and people began to observe that brother Lawrence seems to be living in some other world. Because his whole movement became like that of one who was absent from here. Though his body was

here, his heart and the greater part of his mind were in the presence of God, praying to Him and always sending petitions to Him. That became his Yoga and his whole Sadhana was a vital feeling of God's presence in his heart. When this transformation came to him, everyone came to be attracted towards him. People who sold vegetables, eggs, etc., after their bargain was over, began to linger near the charming personality of brother Lawrence. Other holy men and monks belonging to other monasteries came to visit this monastery for the purpose of seeing brother Lawrence, They said: "You seem to have tapped some source wherefrom Bliss seems to come and animate you." Though he did not like to write or say anything about himself, yet, when loving pressure was brought to bear upon him, he wrote a number of letters to earnest seekers who sought to know the secret of his own inner wealth, and each letter was a treasure to the person who received it. And after his time all these people met together and put those letters together, and this series of letters written by brother Lawrence to various people came to be known as "*The Presence of God*—by Brother Lawrence." It has been translated into various languages.

What is the wonderful lesson that is given to us by the wonderful life of Prahlada? He saw only Narayana everywhere. His father Hiranyakasipu was cruel and also an atheist. Prahlada was blessed with spiritual knowledge even when he was in his mother's womb. The moment the young boy

for if this news reached the king, his head would be off. He tried his best to dissuade him from repeating the names of the Lord. The teacher said: "For God's sake do not sing the Lord's name." When this news reached the ear of his father, he tried to change his child. He asked the child not to repeat the name of Narayana. Prahlada replied: "Narayana is the life of my life." Then the father tried his level best to kill the boy. He pushed him from the top of a mountain, had him bitten by serpents and put him into fire. But everytime he took the Name of the Lord. He was made to drink poison. He was thrown into water and boiling oil. Everywhere, he saw Narayana only. He saw nothing but the Lord. At last his father asked him: "Where is Narayana?" He replied: "You are asking me where He is. The question to be asked is 'where is He not'?" The father asked: "Then is He in this pillar?", and he gave an angry kick to the pillar. Immediately the pillar was rent asunder and Lord Narayana came out in the form of man-lion (Nara-Simha) and destroyed Hiranyakasipu.

The central lesson given to us in the story of Prahlada is that the Lord is everywhere. The entire universe is fully permeated by the Lord. Whatever is here, whatever is there, is pervaded by the Lord. As butter pervades the entire milk, even so the Lord is pervading the entire universe and with this remembrance of the all-pervading nature of the Lord, the communion with the Lord is never broken. It is the surest method of establishing oneself in Yoga. Ultimately Yoga means perfect, integral union with the Lord. It is paving the way for the

perfect union in the deepest depths of Yoga. All the sages tried to give this lesson in different ways. When Namadeva was preparing Rotti, a dog came and snatched it away. He ran after the dog taking a bowel of ghee saying: "It will affect your throat; it is dry; so take this ghee."

Another story is here. A saint went on a pilgrimage to Banares. He took Ganga water from Banares. It is the practice of people to take Ganga water from Banares and take it to Ramesvaram, where also there is a temple of Lord Siva. He was going to Ramesvaram carrying the water. He came, after several days' travel, near the Ramesvaram temple. It was a hot sunny day. Near the temple an ass was in a state of exhaustion. It had fallen and it was dying on account of extreme thirst. All the people there were busy with their worship in the temple. No one had time to attend to the ass. But this devotee was feeling the presence of God. When he went near the ass, he thought: "When I have this living Lord, what better use can I make use of this Ganga water?" He poured the water into the open mouth of the ass. He felt that he was offering it to the Lord Himself in the physical form, and the deity which other people worship in the temple, appeared before him and blessed him.

In Gazipur there was a saint living by the side of the Ganga. A dacoit broke into his house. He had some silver vessels. For many days the dacoit had been watching. A lot of devotees used to give offerings to the saint. The dacoit thought that there must be some treasure. In the first chamber the vessels were kept. When the thief broke in, there was

a lot of utensils. He took them and filled his bag. It made noise. The saint who heard it said: What is this? Some animal is coming." So he just came out of his meditation and saw a big man. When the thief saw him, the former began to take to his heels. Immediately the saint took the bag of utensils and ran behind the thief asking him to stop. He overtook the thief and said: "Why are you afraid? These are yours. Some more I will give you." And thus the thief was sent away with all the things he had in his house. Years later, when Swami Vivekananda was going on a pilgrimage to Kedar, Badri, etc., he saw a Sadhu lying on the icy region. In those days the conditions of travelling were quite different altogether. Then there was no proper route and no proper facilities. With great difficulty he was making his pilgrimage. It was on his way somewhere that he saw the Sadhu in the icy region, lying helpless. Vivekananda gave him his own blanket. At that time the Sadhu looked up, and finding that Vivekananda was a spiritual man, began to narrate something of his past life.

"Have you heard of saint Pavahari Baba?", he asked Swami Vivekananda. Then he told him all about the incident that happened in the life of Pavahari Baba. He continued "I am the thief. From that day when the saint touched me a transformation came into my life. I repented my action bitterly. Since that time I am trying to atone for my sins." That is the power of the saints. "God is everywhere"—this feeling is a wonderful method of progressing in your attempt to commune with God and ultimately become one with Him.

ASANA

By the practice of Yama and Niyama, the external and the internal nature of man gets purified and becomes ready for the reception of the higher experience. Then he goes to the essence of his physical nature. This is the third stage. This requires a deep understanding of the constitution of man. You know the body is made up of five elements. It is made up of invisible, rapidly-moving electrons. The protons and electrons are the innermost parts of your material being. And you know how all these things of the universe are the products of the three qualities, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. What are they? They are three different tempos of vibration, the grossest vibrating tempo tending to be Tamasic, the subtler one tending to be Rajasic and the subtlest tending to be Sattvic.

The purpose of the third stage of Raja Yoga, *viz.*, Asana, is to bring about perfect Sattvaguna in every part of the being. Everything should be pervaded by the quality of harmony, Sattva. For that purpose sage Patanjali prescribed the Asana. It is not the Asana which we do in Hatha Yoga. In Raja Yoga, inasmuch as the third step is to bring about a state of perfect balance

vibration in the body, Asana is a training or discipline to make the body completely quiescent, absolutely still, without the least movement, as still as a stone, so that there is not the least disturbance. Any disturbance, any shaking, any movement in the body has its natural reaction upon the mind. Body and mind are not different water-tight compartments. They are interdependant. If you make violent movements in the body, they react on the Prana which in turn reacts on the mind. And if you bring about absolute stillness in the body, Prana will become steady, and mind also will tend to become steady. That is the purpose of Asana.

Therefore Asana, according to Patanjali, means disciplining oneself to maintaining *for a long time* an absolutely steady and still posture—motionless-ness. When you become absolutely motionless, breath also becomes controlled slowly. The breath gets regulated. You can steadily maintain a posture only if it is *comfortable*. If the posture is uncom-fortable, man will want to change it. So you want a comfortable posture, so that you may remain in it for a long time.

"*Sthira-Sukham Asanam*—Posture is that which is firm and comfortable." A steady and comfortable pose alone will be absolutely motionless. To achieve maximum motionlessness *for the* maximum possible duration is the central purpose of Asana. Day after day, the aspirant tries to still himself. There-by Rajas gets controlled. When Rajas is controlled, Tamas is also controlled, because Rajas contains in itself Tamas also. The higher contains the lower

also. The Tamasic vibratory tempo of the inner cells is completely eliminated and the Rajasic tempo gets controlled. If it is not controlled it makes the mind outgoing. A state of supreme Sattva prevails in every cell of the body.

Asana has to be perfected by continuous daily practice. In the initial stages, it may take some time to strike upon the proper Asana. Padmasana may suit some people, but it will not suit all people. Siddhasana will suit some people. For some people Svastikasana is suitable. You will have to find out which Asana is the most suitable for you. You cannot centre your mind upon any one Lakshya as long as you do not forget the body.

When you are able to sit continuously for three hours on one Asana at a stretch, it is called Asanajaya. It makes the body completely Sattvic. The Rajas and Tamas are controlled. Asanajaya prepares a man to proceed to the next step, Pranayama. In the beginning, if you get pain while sitting on an Asana, you should come back from the Asana and take a little rest. You must adopt some practical measures. Of course, some pain has to be endured in the spiritual path; because you are going to attain the highest bliss. No sacrifice is too much. The real seeker thinks that he has renounced nothing. If you throw away some dud coins from your pocket when a friend promises to fill the pocket with gold, you cannot say that you have sacrificed anything. Similarly you are going to sacrifice the worthless things of the world in return for the highest immortal bliss. Therefore, Titiksha

is necessary, and Vedanta mentions Titiksha as one of the Shad-Sampat or six virtues.

If the aspirant practises steady posture, the entire vibratory tempo of the cells gets transformed into Sattva. When Sattva predominates, the Prana gets equilibrium. Now the Yogi takes to the practice of Pranayama for regulation of breath.

Asana also is a sort of Tapascharya. There is always an urge for movement in the body. By Asana, you try to resist that urge. Therefore, it brings about self-control.

There are four Asanas, Padmasana, Siddhasana, Svastikasana and Sukhasana. There is also another set of eight Asanas which all fulfil the conditions of comfort and the possibility of their being practised for a long time.

Another effect of Asana is that it conser energy. Movement dissipates energy. When y move your body, there is more waste of breath a there is more wear and tear whereas perfect ste diness of Asana for the time being completely min mises wear and tear and thus conserves energy. Yo will understand it if you consider the hibernatio of certain creatures in cold countries. For si months they fast and they do not take any foo But there is no wastage of energy, because all move ment is stopped and all energy is therefore kept a standstill. This conservation of physical energy is converted into subtle energy by Pranayama and utilised for concentration purposes.

Another point to be noted is that the more you proceed in Asanas, the more you gain mastery over an absolutely unshaken posture. The sensation of the body begins to diminish. Your connection with the body is made finer and finer. Normally, the body-consciousness is very gross, and every sensation is carried to the brain and it is felt as an acute nervous experience. That state of nervous experience is changed, the feeling of sensitiveness is slowly diminished and the nervous experience of sensation is minimised. Therefore, by absolute control over Asanas you slowly begin to go over body-consciousness. It does not mean that you have attained spiritual consciousness, but there is some transcendence of body-consciousness. What happens then? The pairs of opposites like heat and cold do not affect you. You can go and sit naked on the bank of Ganga in winter. You will not feel the cold. That is the peculiar power of Asanajaya. Even remaining in Ganga water if you meditate and make your pose absolutely steady, you will have no more sensation. This kind of steadiness in one posture is necessary if you have to go to the further stages. Because, as long as the body reacts to the experience of the pairs of opposites, the mind is pulled down to the body and it cannot be fixed upon the inner Lakshya. As you progress and acquire greater and greater steadiness in Asana, you begin to rise above the experience of the pairs of opposites. Asanajaya is attained by meditating on the Infinite. By sheer will-power you cannot make the body steady.

The secret of making the body steady is to take

the mind away from the body. Allow the mind to hold in its consciousness the conception of the formless infinite expanse. The very thought of form should go away. Then what happens? The thought of body itself disappears. The conception of the formless Infinite enables the practitioner to forget the finite body. This is called Pratipaksha-Bhavana. Hold the consciousness of the formless Infinite and the consciousness of the finite form goes away. As a result, the body continues to remain in the same posture. It is left like a block of wood or a piece of stone. That is the secret of getting absolute steadiness of posture. You will have to take the mind away from the finite body and hold it on the idea of the formless Infinite—Ananta.

Some commentators say, Ananta means snake, which is supposed to hold the earth, because if you hold something heavy you cannot move. But another commentator says, Ananta means Infinite. By steady posture all metabolic processes are minimised. The steadiness of the body has effect on the mind and Prana, and energy is conserved. It can be utilised for concentration, and one becomes impervious to the effects of the pairs of opposites.

PRANAYAMA

PRANAYAMA is the fourth limb of Raja Yoga expounded by Patanjali Maharshi. In a most scientific manner he proceeds from the external most sheath of man and slowly proceeds to the subtler and subtler sheaths. Breath and mind are closely interdependent and interpenetrating. Control of breath means the cessation of the outgoing and ingoing movements of breath. Breath is the gross representative of the subtle, vital force inside the body. Just as by catching hold of the key of a timepiece you do not allow it to move and the subtler cug wheels and finally the subtlest hair-spring come to a standstill, even so, by the control of that force which sets into motion the mind, the mind stops its motion. It is Prana that makes the mind move. If the Prana is stopped the mind cannot move and a state of stillness (Manonasha) comes. Therefore, stopping of the movement of Prana is Pranayama. It is not the nine or ten varieties of Pranayamas given in Hatha Yoga texts. The various Prnayamas in Hatha Yoga (Sitali, Sitkari, etc.) are not meant here. It is concerned with Kumbhaka only. There is external Kumbhaka. When you have exhaled stop there and do not inhale. That is external Kumbhaka. Similarly, if you stop the breath inside, it

is internal Kumbhaka. Sometimes automatically breath stops whether it is inside or outside. It is Kevala Kumbhaka. By Pranayama all the internal organs of man become purified. We know that there is Rajoguna, Sattvaguna and Tamoguna in a person. Our aim is to bring Sattvaguna to its maximum expression and manifestation. But there is the veil of impurity that does not allow Sattva to manifest itself fully. Pranayama removes the veil of impurity and makes Sattva fully manifest itself. That is the main purpose of Pranayama. One has to slowly stop the mind, because mind and Prana are closely interconnected, and consequently purify the mind and through purification remove the veil that prevents Sattva manifesting itself fully. When Sattva supervenes, all good ideas come and one becomes established in Yama and Niyama. Everything becomes fine. Mind is steady. Therefore fitness for the practice of concentration is attained. The purpose of Pranayama is to make the aspirant practise concentration.

PRATYAHARA

ALL THE first four Angas of Ashtanga Yoga are in the nature of preparations rather than Yoga proper. They are the ground-work of Yoga. In Jnana Yoga the actual Yoga is Nididhyasana (deep meditation) and in order to make you fit for deep meditation you go on continuously hearing the Truths of the Upanishads—the inner nature of the Reality—from the Sadguru. If the same idea goes on coming, the suggestion contained therein later on works. Everyday the Guru tells you that you are not this body, not this fickle mind and that you are the eternal imperishable Atman. The consciousness inside is then aroused. That essential consciousness that is dormant and sleeping is subjected to this positive, inspiring, true idea which reveals the nature of your essential Self. If the dormant consciousness is subjected to a constant flow of these thoughts, slowly the thick veil of wrong thought is penetrated and the right thought reaches the centre of consciousness and there is a peculiar transformation in your consciousness. The consciousness that 'I am the body', 'I am suffering', etc., slowly begins to disappear. You get freed more and more from the bondage of being tied to the body. A subtle change begins to happen in your consciousness. You feel

that the body alone experiences and you are unaffected. This imperceptible change takes place.

A story is told that a lioness was about to attack a flock of sheep that was grazing. She sprang upon a sheep but missed her aim, and she crashed against a rock and died on the rock, and in the crash she gave birth to a child, cub. The shepherd was deeply moved by the incident. He took the cub and some foster-mother was found in the flock and the cub grew in the midst of the sheep. Gradually it grew into its full size. It went to the pasture along with the shepherd, got frightened with the least noise as the other sheep were frightened, and its consciousness was one with the consciousness of the flock with which it had come into contact from its very birth. So, even after growing into a big lion it showed the quality of the sheep. Then on a certain day, another lion came and attacked the flock, and the sheep in terror began to bleat and run, and this lion among them also ran in terror. The second lion was wonderstruck and said: "Why this lion is afraid of me? This should not be." It ran after the first lion and called out: "Stop bleating; what is this strange behaviour! Do you know what you are?" It said: "I am a sheep." Then the second lion took the first one to some water and said: "Look." It looked and saw itself as a lion with full strength. Then the second lion said: "Roar like me." The first lion obeyed the instruction and gave a roar. Then it got back the lion-consciousness and went to the jungle. "Similarly", the wise say, "You are in fact Satchidananda, eternal Existence, immortal, imperishable substance.

There is no disease, no weakness, no imperfection. You are ever perfect, resplendent being. This idea you have forgotten and therefore you think that you are this body."

Even when you were a child, you said 'I'. This 'I' is the same when you are a child or a grown-up. Your attitude is different, your sentiments are different and your ambitions are different; yet the same 'I' continues. Though you feel change, yet you feel the unchanging 'I'. Even after you have become a father with all responsibilities, you know that you are the same man who was a child, who was a youth, who has married. When you become a grandfather, then also you know and feel: 'I was a child, a boy, a married man and have now become old.' The 'I' remains unchanged. This 'I' is Satchidananda.

By constantly keeping your consciousness to the current of the idea: 'I am not this body', you are not troubled by the gross consciousness and later you become impervious to the influences of the external body. The state of Sthitaprajna, who is established in the knowledge of the Self is described in the Bhagavadgita. You should practise Sravana (hearing) and Manana (thinking over and over again of what you have heard), and then comes deep meditation, to the absolute exclusion of all other distracting thoughts. Then follows purification of your internal and external nature.

Yama is purification of your actions by cultivating virtues, so that you are established in virtues and you never do anything bad. Then Niyama makes your daily activities flow towards God, and there-

after the innermost parts of this body made up of five elements, the very cells, are brought into an absolute Sattvic vibratory tempo through the practice of Asana, by holding the body in an absolutely unshaken steady position. You next go to the vital sheath through regulation of breath, Pranayama. By controlling the breath you control the mind, and then the veil that covers the Sattvic nature is removed by the practice of Pranayama.

From the fifth Anga, Raja Yoga proper starts. There you take up the mind. Mind is the instrument for the attainment of the supreme fruit of Yoga. Mind that is filled with impurity is an obstacle to Yoga; but that very same mind, when it becomes refined, when the Mala is removed, when the faculty of oscillation is arrested, becomes the means for Yoga. Even there you must remember that only up to a certain extent it is a help and after that it is a bar.

Transcending the mind is the purpose of Yoga. Suppose there is a big paper-kite. It will not fly by itself but will drop down. In order to make it fly you want a thread to be attached to it. You slightly pull the thread. If the thread is not there, it will not rise higher. But after it has risen high in the atmosphere, the thread acts as a bar. Then it breaks the thread and goes further higher up in the atmosphere. Similar is the case with the mind. Initially the mind is useful in going up. But at last you have to go beyond the mind. If you want to enter a high terrace you want a ladder. But you have to give up the ladder after you have

reached the highest rung in it. When the Yogi reaches a certain stage in his practice, he finds that the mind is of the nature of an obstacle. It is scattered over an infinite number of things. It is attached to so many things and it has got through association, a sort of mental addiction. In the presence of objects you may not feel that you are attached, but when you do not have them you feel that you are missing them. So, the first task of the Yogi is to withdraw the mind from the objects. Why do you go outside? Why do you search for happiness outside? That is not the real goal.

You can use any method but only wean away the mind from its tendency to go towards objects. Sometimes you may have to use persuation. Sometimes you may have to arrest it by sheer force. At other times you may have to take the help of Pranayama. In various ways you try to completely break down its tendency to go towards objects. This is the fifth stage when you give your whole attention to withdrawing the mind from the senses. For this purpose, you also remove the senses from sense-objects. Herein comes the need for isolation.

Why do people go into seclusion? Because, there they do not find so many objects, which attract the common man's eye. At one stroke you lessen the flow of senses towards objects by going into seclusion. So, for Pratyahara a Yogi should not live amidst cities and busy throng of men. You should not constantly keep the mind amidst objects. Later on, you may, with caution, move about amidst objects, but in the beginning when you are

practising Pratyahara, it is necessary that you sec lude yourself, so that it facilitates the process o withdrawal of the mind from external objects. Whei a young plant is planted you have to fence it up Otherwise even a little lamb can chew it. Even sc when Yoga is tender, this fencing of Yoga by iso-lation is necessary. But when the plant grows intc a mighty tree, there is no need for a fence, and you can tie even an elephant around it.

You may ask why in Ananda Kutir—Sivananda Ashram—there is so much rush of people. Here there is some distinctness. Here we have chosen the path of discipleship. All our Yoga is centralis-ed and channelised through discipleship, because we are under the constant halo of Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji's grace. We are in a fortress. The presence of the grace of a realised sage here acts as a fortress. Our Yoga becomes protected by our Guru, because our consciousness becomes ab-sorbed in doing Gurudev's work. You are not allowed to go here and there. The consciousness does not waver here and there. That is why it is necessary to have protection during the stage of Pratyahara. As day after day you go on making this Abhyasa of Pratyahara, your mind gets the habit of inwardness. Then, even if the senses come into contact with their objects, you begin to ex-perience that the objects do not have the power to draw out the senses, because the mind has started going inward.

If the mind is linked with the sense-objects, the senses go to the objects. When the mind is

reposed in your ideal it keeps the mind always busy, and the temptations do not draw it out. Only in careless moments the senses may be drawn out, but normally the senses are not much stimulated by their respective objects. In that state, even when things impinge upon the senses, the senses do not convey them to the mind. So, if a man in Pratyahara goes to Rishikesh bazar and hears a very sentimental music in a radio, he may hear the sound, but since he has a background of mind the mind does not take in the meaning of the song.

A man may see, but he may not look. A man may hear, but he may not listen. He touches but does not feel. This way the contact of the mind with the senses is gradually cut off. The mind then becomes withdrawn into itself where it is given a background upon which it can rest, and that background is your ideal. It may be a whole series of ideas. It may be a pattern of life into which you are trying to grow. It may be some personality into whose likeliness you are trying to grow. Like that, the background that is given to the mind makes the mind introverted and the senses lose their urge to move towards their objects. A withdrawal is effected, and the withdrawal it is that prepares the mind for the next stage of concentration. Before fixing the mind you have to gather it from other objects. This preliminary process of gathering the mind is called Pratyahara. The rays of the mind are centralised and brought together. The sixth Anga of Raja Yoga is to fix the withdrawn mind upon the object of your meditation. This is called Dharana, the holding of the mind, steadily upon

the object of meditation. It is concentration. Now we are in Yoga proper. Yoga means concentration and meditation through which alone you get superconsciousness. What are the obstacles in concentration, how the mind behaves when you try to fix it upon one object, we shall consider in the following pages.

DHARANA

PRACTICE OF CONCENTRATION

CONCENTRATION is a question of persistent, persevering endeavour. It does not become fruitful in a day. It is not a process which at once gives results overnight. In the beginning it is a very unpleasant and painful process. Because the very nature of human mind is to be scattered and to oscillate between numerous things. Oscillation from one object to another is the characteristic of the mind. It never stops. It is like a grasshopper. It is outgoing. Inasmuch as now you set yourself to change the entire Prakriti of the mind and try to imprison it and hold it on to one object of meditation, naturally the mind feels it to be a terrible bondage, and it does not want to do it; and here it is that the Sadhaka requires great tenacity. He must always struggle keeping in view the glorious end which will ultimately lead him to eternal happiness.

It is only when one is perfectly convinced and firm in one's faith about the ultimate nature of realisation, that one can go through the hard and dry process of concentration. Otherwise, when people come to the stage of concentration, they find that there is absolutely no progress whatsoever. They practise days, months and years and still make no pro-

gress and they feel disgusted. Therefore, experienced masters take to devices. They teach various methods to seekers to make this dry process of concentration as interesting as possible. They give very many methods when the mind gets disgusted.

If you get tired of concentration upon your ideal, all right, stop it and try to think at that particular moment what is most pleasing to you—some beautiful flowers, or some scenery which you have once seen—and which is very pleasant to you. Try to bring to your mind that thing which is most pleasant and upon which the mind likes to get spontaneously fixed. Then the mind gets fixed. It is a question of mental training. Various devices have to be adopted by the seeker in order to make the dry process of concentration as interesting and appealing to him as possible. If at some times the mind refuses to concentrate, then give it up and read some books or do some Kirtan. When the mood comes again do concentration.

You must always use your intelligence and try to make concentration as pleasant and interesting as possible, and in this respect you have merely to fall back upon the device of Bhava (feeling). The Bhakta has the advantage of this Bhava whereas the Raja Yogi does not have this advantage. Concentration is always pleasant to the Bhakta, because to think of his beloved is pleasant, whereas a Vedantin has to invoke waves of inspiration such as: "I am Bliss, Indescribable Joy", etc. He tries to fill himself with that sort of elevation.

Yet, with all these, the mind becomes difficult to be controlled. Concentrating upon some sound or repeating Pranava (Om), trying to concentrate upon a Mantra,—like these, various methods are given, so that at no time the mind stops concentration. Yet, with all these, sometimes concentration becomes very irksome. You must know when concentration should be stopped. You should not stop concentration the moment the mind does not want to do it. Intelligently and shrewdly you must study the capacity of the mind and do this checking up periodically. Sometimes if you find that the mind is unreasonably trying to side-track you, you should force it to carry on the concentration, and when you think that it has reached its full capacity and that you will not be able to force it further, then you will have to use other devices. It is a sort of daily study. Every time you should know whether the mind is fresh or tired. The practice of concentration has to be governed by common-sense and discrimination. You attain progress in concentration only through Abhyasa or repeated practice. Together with this, there are also some negative safeguards which we have to take in order that concentration may be steady and successful. What are these safeguards?

VAIRAGYA

SOME people find that if they try to concentrate, the mind runs hither and thither. They say: "We cannot concentrate." They should question themselves: 'Why does the mind run away?'; and then add to this 'why' the question 'where'—'where does

the mind run to?' It is very difficult to find out Subconsciously there is some disturbance. If you question 'why' and 'where', certain thoughts come and disturb the mind. And what are these thoughts? —thoughts of some persons, or some experiences, or some previous memory. Always they are some thoughts connected with objects, the objective world and objective experience. If you pursue this investigation further, you will find that the mind tends to run away into those channels and towards those objects to which it is attached, and for which it has a desire. This desire will be in the subconscious level and you may not be conscious of it. You may not know it.

Analysis will reveal that the mind always tends to run away to those objects to which the individual s attached; and attachment is the same as desire. Attachment and desire go hand in hand. Where here is attachment, there is desire for the object. Therefore, ultimate analysis will reveal that conentration is hampered by desires and attachments. t means Raga-Dvesha. Either you think of a thing which you do not like, or you think of a thing which ou like and to which you are attached. Therefore, ttachment and repulsion are at the root of the roblem. It means lack of Vairagya or dispassion.

If you do not have dispassion, the mind persists being attached to various things. Therefore, you ust know that the ultimate enemy of concentraon is lack of Vairagya. Lord Krishna has said to rjuna: "It is impossible almost to control the nd; it is very difficult no doubt, but it is possible

through persistent endeavour, and by being established in Vairagya." You must develop dispassion. You must give up desires and attachments. Vairagya is your safeguard and the negative part of your Yoga-Sadhana. By unceasing endeavour you must constantly try to keep yourself established in a perfect state of Vairagya which comes through constant discrimination.

Throughout the twenty-four hours you must discriminate. Discrimination must always go on. Only a discriminating man knows the true nature of things. Where discrimination is lacking, desire springs up, mind runs hither and thither and concentration becomes unsuccessful. Therefore the root of Vikshepa (the tossing of the mind) is desire and lack of Vairagya. When we reach the sixth stage of Raja Yoga, *viz.*, concentration, we must always remember that the two guiding factors are Abhyasa and Vairagya—unceasing effort and steady dispassion. They are the twin watchwords that a Yogi, who is striving for success in concentration, should bear in mind always and put into practice in his life.

What are the other aids of concentration? Though concentration primarily concerns with the mind, we know that the mind is connected with Prana, and Prana is connected with body which has to move amidst the objects of this universe. So ultimately the mind is connected also with the entire active life of man. Out of this we have to deduce certain great principles. They will give us valuable guidance and certain hints about concentration.

SECLUSION AND SATTVIC DIET

ONE thing that you must try, as much as possible, is to avoid all outside contacts when you are trying to be a Yogi. You must try to avoid all those contacts in your daily life, which go against Yoga—contacts with such of those places, persons, environments and things which make the mind outgoing and which stimulate desires. All things which are of this nature, which drag us outward towards the sense-world and which shake up our Vairagya should be avoided. Therefore it is that when a Yogi reaches the stage of concentration, the wise say: "Do not read newspapers or novels, and do not keep contacts with worldly people. Do not have attachment to anybody. Be in places where the scenery is spiritual. Have ideal surroundings, lead an ideal life and have contacts with holy people. Move always with saintly people and true aspirants."

If you move always with worldly-minded people, what will happen? Their company will completely vitiate your inner life. Therefore, if you are earnest in concentration and meditation, you will have to see that your external life is also made conducive, as much as possible, to your inner Sadhana. There is the factor of food. Suppose you indulge in food which is extremely Rajasic or Tamasic. It will completely pull the mind out of balance and the process of concentration will be affected. The most harmful habit is that of drinking. One is in the habit of drinking and at the same time he wants to do concentration! How can he get success? The effect of liquor is demoralising, whereas the purpose of Yoga is to get complete control over your

whole personality. In between drinking and a perfectly controlled life there are many things which though they do not affect the mind as much as liquor, their cumulative effect does as much mischief as a glass of liquor. Supposing you persistently go on taking such items of food which are not Sattvic and not conducive to concentration—what happens? The mind gets disturbed. So the diet should be Sattvic. This is the general rule.

Diet which is Sattvic in quality is always the most conducive to Yoga. From the point of view of immediate daily practice also, you must see that the daily diet is not such as that will upset your concentration. One common universal cause of diet upsetting concentration is overeating and immoderation. If you fill your stomach with too much food the entire blood is drawn to the stomach. When you do concentration all your blood has to go to the brain. Concentration requires a lot of blood. By sitting on an Asana, maximum supply of blood is made available to the brain. But if you have eaten heavily, the blood will go to the stomach and if you then try to take the blood to the head, your system revolts, and instead of concentrating you become drowsy. Drowsiness is the result of too much food.

Even if you have not erred through immoderation, there are such food-stuffs which cause wind (Vayu). Wind is a thing which upsets the Prana. Prana is thrown out of balance if there is wind in the system. Therefore, Sadhakas should take great care. If they desire to have successful sitting in

concentration, they should avoid things like potato pumpkin, etc. If unavoidable, you may take them in moderation. There are some foods which may not be generally wind-producing by themselves but in certain persons they may produce wind. The diet may be good generally speaking, but to your peculiar constitution it may not be suitable. You must avoid those things. The immediate effect of your daily food should also be taken into consideration if your daily sitting should be successfully attempted and done. This is on the physical level.

Be careful about taking food and also about the external environment. Make the mind introvert. When you move in the midst of company you should develop such a technique that minimum impression alone is taken during daily Vyavahara. In the early morning the mind is all right after a sound sleep. But throughout the day you are moving with too many people. Perhaps you may lose your temper with some persons, and such impressions may fill your mind with nervous agitation. So mind may be in a condition of nervousness at the end of the day's work. All those things that happened from morning till night begin to worry you, and what is the technique to avoid this? You must try to keep up a balance even when you are in Vyavahara. Only by an earnest practice you can develop serenity and equanimity. Whatever experience you undergo, always try to keep up the mind in a state of balance.

Have a sort of Pratyahara, so that even when you come into contact with objects, you do not allow the impressions of the objects to interest them-

selves too deeply in the mind. There must be a spontaneous indrawn state. This does not mean that we should neglect our works. A part of our mind should be given in all alertness to work and the major part of the mind should always be indrawn. This process of attention outside and a state of indrawnness is a great help to have constant remembrance of the Lord. Or repeat Om or any other Mantra and also have a background thought in the mind. At no moment of your life the mind should be blank.

Many people do not have a background. All sorts of thoughts come to people who do not have a background. Immediately a work is over, the aspirant should have a background in the form of a mental picture of his Ishta. It must be a background into which, through force of habit, the mind will go back. So what happens? Even when you move about, the mind will be resting on this background and only a portion of the mind will be working outside. In this state, even when you are engaged in a thing, you are not totally possessed by it. Once you have developed this technique, all the while you are engaged in your daily activities, the background will always be there in the consciousness. This indrawnness is a great help to keep the mind free from the impressions obtained in daily life.

Concentration is one per cent a question of theory and ninety-nine per cent a question of practice. No amount of reading or lecturing will be of any help in concentration. Daily practice alone will help

you, and whatever difficulty you encounter in concentration will be overcome through practice alone. As long as you try to solve problems first and then take up concentration so long you will be solving problems only, and will not be able to concentrate. Abhyasa is the key-word to success in concentration.

VARIOUS TYPES OF CONCENTRATION

CONCENTRATION brings us to the threshold of Yoga proper. We have seen that all religious exercises of any cult or any path have as their ultimate aim, the equipment of the seeker to practise sound meditation. Whatever may be the faith, whatever may be the external details of spiritual life, the central process which ultimately all seekers are gradually trained to do is meditation. That is detaching and attaching—detaching one's consciousness from the awareness of the world of names and forms and attaching it to the inner ideal of the ultimate Reality. It is the switching off the senses from the instinctive perception of the external world, and the switching on of the inner faculty of the pure mind upon the ideal to be attained. This is the central process of Yoga. All spiritual exercises aim at working out this. This is the ultimate way through which the seeker has to enter the supermundane realms. Therefore the art of concentration has always been one which the seeker has to learn by entering into the path of discipleship at the feet of the Sadguru, because as a spiritual exercise it is something entirely different from the art of concentration as it is known to people in other spheres of

activities. Concentration is required everywhere. Without concentration no one can do any job properly. A scientist concentrates upon his research work. An artist has to keenly concentrate upon the picture that he is to paint. The musician has to concentrate on his songs. The watch-maker has to concentrate very keenly on his work. But all these concentrations are upon the mental level and they are externalised, whereas the act of spiritual concentration is totally different from all of them. Even the concentration of occultists who try to develop clairvoyance is gross, because it is based upon their personal egoistic consciousness. They have not been able to transcend the consciousness: "I am this body." A man who wants to develop hypnotism also practises a certain type of concentration, but the spiritual ideal is not there, and even when he is concentrating, his consciousness is based on the individual, illusory self.

The spiritual concentration is based on the denial of the individualistic personality by affirming: "I am not this body, I do not belong to this perishable world and I am ever-free, ever-perfect, spiritual entity." Here the seeker tries to concentrate on the internal source of his Being. It is totally inward and spiritual, whereas the other forms of concentration that are practised are outward and they are practised in the realm of illusion, because the concentrator is still basing his consciousness on the perishable things. Therefore, spiritual concentration has to be learned by the side of one's Guru. It is not always that the Masters require the phy-

sical nearness of the aspirants. Masters who have realised the highest spiritual consciousness—to them it is not absolutely indispensable. It is no doubt a boon to the aspirants, but even where it is not possible, the Master can guide the aspirant. Concentration should not be done without the guidance of one's Master. You must stick to whatever line of concentration he has suggested for you.

It is the usual practice of the disciple, first of all, to meditate upon his Guru when he sits for his meditation. After your mind is gathered upon the Guru, superimpose upon the personality of the Guru, your own deity. Or if you are a Vedantin meditating upon the Nirguna Brahman, after meditating upon the embodiment of your Guru, you slowly negate the form and bring in your transcendental ideal.

So the feeling of the presence of the Guru and the initial concentration upon the Guru as you start your meditation will greatly help to make your meditation smooth and successful.

To the devotees the object of concentration is the form of their Deity. Such people usually have their own Dhyana-Slokas. A Dhyana-Sloka is a verse containing prayerful thought or glorification (Stuti) of the Deity which brings out before you in a vivid way a complete form of your Deity. If you are a worshipper of Siva there are some special Slokas which give you a description of His form with the deer-skin, the matted lock, the third eye, etc. Similarly Lord Vishnu is described in a Sloka as

wearing the yellow robe, the mace, the lotus, the disc, etc. Bhagavan Krishna is described as having a bewitching and smiling face, flute in His hand, etc. Like that for every Deity, there are what are known as Dhyana-Slokas. For aspirants who are doing meditation on the Lord with form, the usual practice is first of all to repeat the Dhyana-Sloka. Through repetition a number of times, the form of the Deity comes eventually before your mind's eye. Then substitute your Sloka by the Guru-Mantra,—'Om Namah Sivaya' for Lord Siva, 'Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya' for Lord Krishna, 'Om Namo Narayanaya' for Lord Vishnu, and so on.

Mantra-Japa is a great help to concentration. There are two ways in which Japa can be used as a help to concentration. One is as you go on chanting the Mantras you reflect over the qualities of the Lord such as dazzling brilliance, infinite peace, etc. Mantras are names pregnant with divine ideas. All names, to whatever form they may refer, ultimately refer to the eternal Reality, which is one without a second, the supreme infinite Spirit. The worship of Siva is the worship of the transcendental Supreme Reality. Equate Siva with the idea of the one Transcendental Supreme Reality. The worshippers of Devi equate Devi with the Supreme Reality. According to their natural inclination, they love one particular form, and they always equate it with the one Supreme Reality, the eternal Infinite Spirit without form and name. So, even when you are repeating a Name, you can bring out all the qualities of Parabrahman, the One without a second, the

Thing-In-Itself, the Supreme Reality. This is one way of keeping your mind fixed upon your ideal. We have to take notice of this point. Whatever Deities we may worship, we worship only one God, the One without a second. The worship of Lord Krishna or Sri Rama is the worship of *Satchidananda*. When a man worships Sri Rama, he does not think of Him as the son of Dasaratha. He extols Him as the Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer of the universe. Even when he says: "You are the son of Dasaratha", in the same breath, he also says: "You are the Creator of the countless universes."

As you go on with this concentration on the Name of God, if at any time the mind tends to wander, the same repetition of the Japa, instead of being internal and verbal, should at once be made external and audible. When you find that the mind begins to wander begin to repeat the Mantra aloud. The moment you repeat the Mantra aloud, the mind is again brought under control. Because, through the ear also the mind is controlled. If, in spite of this, the mind again begins to wander, you must open your eyes and concentrate on the physical form of your Ideal which you should keep in front of you when you sit for meditation. If you are a Vedantin, you can place the form of "OM" in front of you. Then you take the help of one more sense-organ, *i.e.*, the eyes, to tie up the mind. At the time of meditation, they become the means of tying down the mind more and more. So through sight also you try to fix the mind upon the ideal, and through sound also you try to fix your mind. Move your

mind on the different aspects of the form again and again. After some time stop the audible repetition and take to silent mental repetition. Ultimately the mental repetition is more effective, but at certain times, the audible repetition becomes a greater help than the silent Japa. These are some of the methods by which the mind, which begins to wander in concentration, is once again brought to its central ideal, the object of your meditation.

I shall give you some more hints for successful concentration. As far as possible try to have a fixed time. That is a great help. Because, all things in this universe have got a tendency to follow a certain rhythm. Things move according to a certain cycle. In the higher cosmic scale and in the individual scale, everything follows according to law. There is a certain order. Seasons also move in an orderly manner. Different phases of man's growth also follow a certain order. The mood of man also changes according to different times. In the morning he may have one mood and in the evening he may have another mood. Even the internal organs follow a certain cycle and this cycle can be gradually changed by judicious habit. In meditation also the mind follows certain laws. If you regulate your period of meditation and if you make it a point to sit at fixed hours for meditation and be regular in the timing of your meditation, what happens? Soon, by the constant repetition of these timings, the mind tends to fall into a meditative mood. Automatically the mind becomes withdrawn. In the physical sphere the scientists have proved this. Suppose you take

a number of animals and you go on feeding them regular, precise hours of the day, with ringing a bell when food is served. The moment the bell rung, saliva is formed in the mouths of the animal Suppose afterwards they make a change in the tin ing of feeding. For some days the mouth of the animals would begin to water at th old timings but after some time they get used t the new timings.

By following a regular and fixed timing for meditation, the mind tends to go into a meditative mood easily at those fixed hours. By fixing the time, the quality of concentration and meditation improves. Man's mind is a mysterious thing. It has got likes and dislikes and it is always under the force of habit. If it is accustomed to certain things, it always tends to get habituated to those things. Therefore, you should not only have a regular timing to set up this cycle of mood in the mind, but you should also have a fixed place. Do not constantly be changing the place. If the place is changed constantly the mind will feel disturbed. One Asana should be followed. Of course, the ideal conditions will not always be there. But as far as possible, one should aim at these ideal conditions. A travelling salesman cannot have this advantage. But for people who have not much travelling—say a teacher, a businessman who has not to do any travel etc.,— they all can have a fixed place for meditation. The necessity and importance of Asana have already been touched upon in the earlier pages. Any Asana in which you can sit for a long time for meditation

should be selected. Some external aids have also to be taken. If the place where you sit is kept very pleasant by keeping fresh flowers and burning incense it will put your mind into a meditative mood. From time immemorial, you will find that, wherever meditation or indrawnness is practised, such as temples, etc., they always have the habit of burning incense. Even in the Oracle of Delphi there was the custom of burning incense. Hindus also keep incense. Generally, fragrant smoke and pleasing flowers are things which at once put the mind into a pleasant frame, and there will not be any distraction. The mind becomes indrawn. They are additions very favourable for concentration and meditation.

The ideal thing is to have a separate meditation room where no one enters and where you also do not enter except for meditation. The place where you live in becomes charged with the vibration of your thoughts, and if you keep a room solely for meditation, the entire atmosphere of that room becomes surcharged with the vibrations of meditation. To have a separate room under lock and key may be possible only for very few persons. For the vast majority of people it may not be possible. Such people should set apart for the purpose at least one corner of a room where they do nothing except meditation.

When you sit for meditation, instead of immediately starting to meditate, in the beginning you just sit quiet. First of all get into a mood of calmness. If there are things agitating your mind, just

keep quiet and be silent, and then try to bring about a sort of channelisation of the thought-flow. This channelisation is brought about by some device which is peculiar to each individual. Each individual will find that certain things will make the mind think of God. For some people it may be folding of hands which makes them turn their minds towards God. For some, it may be the gentle humming of a Mantra or Pranava. Or some people may start the meditation by first singing some hymn which at once makes the mind go towards God. By practice the mind gets under its influence, and you are able to bring about concentration.

Apart from this, any elevating chant in any language, may help you and it should be the same for all days. By following a set procedure the mind becomes fixed. Immediately after coming from your distractive work, if you try to concentrate, the mind may refuse to concentrate. So, first of all put the mind into the proper mood.

What is the greatest distraction for the mind? It is the external world. So, when you are starting meditation, first try to tell yourself, try to feel that there is no universe, no world, nothing. There is neither the sun, nor the moon, nor this world. Efface the universe from your thoughts. And then what is there? There is nothing. You alone are. Now, slowly begin to negate your own personality, the head, face, limbs, etc. Then what is there? This complete effacement of all earth-consciousness, all earthly thoughts and the world-thoughts is first

brought about. When you feel that there is absolutely nothing, slowly bring in the thought that the Lord alone is, the Supreme Spirit alone is. Then you fill the mind with your particular conception of God as taught by your Guru. If you are a devotee, fill your mind with the thought that there are only two,—God and the meditator. If you are a Vedantin, feel that there is only one vast expanse of limitless existence, unfathomable peace and infinite bliss. Peace alone is. There is nothing else. Try to fill your mind with your conception of the Reality. These twofold things,—negating the entire world idea and even your personality and asserting positively only the presence that Supreme Being,—are powerful helps. And the more you practise these, the easier it becomes to immediately get into the mood of meditation. There is no thought of the world at all and the entire consciousness is filled with the one supreme thought of that Being. And then start the meditation.

One may come across various obstacles in meditation. One dire enemy of meditation is sleep. The second dire enemy is Manorajya or building castles in the air. You may think that you are meditating, but at the same time you might have gone to a different realm where you begin to imagine this and that, and the most mysterious portion of it is while you are doing it, you do not know that you are doing it. And then, perhaps when you come down you may be shocked into the realisation, what you have been actually doing. The thing at the back of castle-building is hidden desires which

you do not know. They tend to bring out pictures so that you have vicarious satisfaction. You know that certain enjoyments are against spiritual life. So when the help of consciousness is withdrawn they try to come in.

Ambitions trouble a great deal in meditation. If you want to *become* a great Yogi *with* many disciples, these ambitions may do great harm. Ambition and desire are two very great obstacles in the spiritual path. In the realm of meditation they work havoc in the aspirant who does not take extra care to keep them at bay. Even in advanced stages, these two things,—ambition to have greatness and desires which you have suppressed—spoil your meditation. Therefore, you must be alert and vigilant about these. They have to be overcome by a number of methods of which the salient ones are prayer to God, an earnest surrender to the Guru and practice of the Divine Name. Divine Name is a powerful spiritual force which can counter and ultimately destroy all obstacles and forces that oppose the aspirant in his inward path of meditation and Yoga. The power of the Name cannot be easily realised unless one keeps deep faith in it and goes on practising it. The method of awakening the power of the Name is through proper Bhava. The more you repeat the Name with Bhava the greater is the force generated, and ultimately the time comes when the force that is hidden in the Name becomes fully awakened. The power of the Name lies dormant in a potential form. But through constant repetition this power,—Mantra-Chaitanya,—is realised.

Just as by splitting an atom you release great power, a million times more is the power released by the Divine Name. Repetition of the Name should be combined with devotion. These are great helps and they are indispensable for attaining success in concentration and meditation.

DHYANA

IF YOU wish to concentrate, the scattered mind has to be withdrawn from the objects. Until you have made it come back from the objects, you cannot concentrate. So, as a preliminary to concentration, withdrawal of the mind is essential and once you have gathered the mind-rays, you can attempt concentration. As long as concentration is not continuous and unbroken, you have to put forth effort to effect it. You require perseverance, faith and above all common-sense. Just as your mind tries to deceive you, you should also deceive your mind. Just as the mind has many devices to dupe you, so you also adapt counter-devices to bring back the mind. There is Vishayakara Buddhi and Vivekatmaka Buddhi. One aspect of the mind wants to unite with objects and there is another part of the mind which wants to know which is proper and which is improper, and what is lasting and what is not lasting. This is discrimination. The mind goes on enquiring: "What for am I here?" The enquiry into the real nature of the objects of this world, enquiry into the real goal that has to be reached—the mind that is associated with this enquiry counteracts on the other part of the mind which has got attached

to the sense-objects. There is thus a fight between the sensual mind and the discriminatory mind.

Through various means—by taking the name of God, by worshipping Him, by surrendering to the Guru, by keeping the company of good people,—as you go on strengthening the pure mind, you achieve greater and greater success. The whole vagaries of the mind tend to subside and when that is done, the mind remains continually fixed in an unbroken current for a long period upon the single object of your meditation. When you can hold your mind without break on the object of your meditation, you reach the seventh stage of Dhyana. Pratyahara, Dharana and Dhyana are the three progressive stages of unitary process. You cannot fix the mind on a hundred objects. So, you have to withdraw the mind from the objects when there is Vikshepa. When you remove Vikshepa you reach the stage of meditation. Thus, through these various stages we have to discipline the mind, until we reach the stage of meditation.

If your mind has become completely purified and you are established in self-control and your nature has become Sattvic, then the process of meditation is not difficult. You have only to intensify the practice. The process goes on smoothly. This is under ideal conditions. But what do you see in the vast majority of cases? The present-day aspirant starts meditation as soon as he reads some books. Actually, Dhyana or meditation is almost the last stage of the Sadhana. It is on the very threshold of the Kingdom of Heaven. If you want

to jump to the top all of a sudden you will find that you are nowhere. The moment you sit for meditation you only enter into the fine realm of mental imagination. You do not know what you are doing. Suddenly you wake up and realise that you have been building castles in the air (*Manorajya*). Why? What is the explanation for it? There are so many cravings and attachments in your mind. The mind is completely impure. There is no Sattva there. So when you sit for meditation the lower mind alone is acting. The stage of actual meditation is reached only when you start rising above the body. Until you transcend body-consciousness, real meditation cannot take place.

The requisite qualification for meditation is a mind which is filled with purity and dispassion. Only such a mind can do meditation. Suddha Manas (pure mind) is conspicuous by its absence in the arly stages of one's practice. You make no progress when you have got various attachments. Any ittle obstacle at once upsets you. As soon as you nter your meditation room with a mind thus upset, will only be re-enacting those things. Only the cident of the day will come to the mind and not ctual meditation. We are very closely connected ith the body. The connection between the mind d the body has not become lessened. It does not wever mean that you should not start meditation til you have reached the high stage. You must ve a proper balance of view. You must know hich is the most important work you have to do. he most important thing is, no doubt, meditation

but not in the beginning. In the beginning, your most important duty is to develop self-control or develop virtues.

Unless you complete your matriculation you cannot become a student of B.A. class. Unless you have passed B.A. you cannot try to become an M.A. First matriculation, then B.A., M.A., and then only Ph.D. comes. So even in the beginning of spiritual life people read some Yoga books and think that meditation gives much peace and that they can master everything. They say: "Meditation is the only thing which will develop a magnetic personality and will give everything. I should therefore start meditation." It is natural, but you must also see what are the conditions you must fulfil before you become fit for meditation. In the beginning you have to perfect your character. If without it you try to do meditation the few hours which you spend will be a waste. You will fall into sleep. To retain awareness while you are in the state of meditation is the most superhuman task of a Yogi. Mostly Tamoguna comes and drowsiness is there. You may go into a sort of dream or build castles.

Therefore, while you proceed in the path of Yoga, you may start with meditation for ten or fifteen minutes. But give the whole emphasis to the preliminary stages like chanting of the Lord's name and reading of the scriptures, etc. Because these are done through your organs of sense and action, they keep your awareness all right. And they are necessary to purify your mind. As you go on practising gradually increase the period of your meditation.

So when, in the beginning, the mind is yet impure you must give proper emphasis on the first stages of Yoga that you have to pass through. Otherwise, you will not succeed in meditation. While you are still bound up with the body, all your bodily conditions react upon the mind and so you have to use common-sense and devices. One saint said: "Not only Mantra and Yantra but tantra also." Tantra means shrewd advice, diplomacy. You must find out where the obstacle is and try to overcome it. Meditation is spoiled when you have got indigestion. You cannot use meditation for curing diseases. You have to go to a doctor and take some digestive mixture. Suppose you are very tired at that time, then also you will not be able to concentrate. You will have to take a little rest. Common-sense will tell you that you should relax for half an hour. Supposing you have taken some foods which are wind-producing, or some bad combination of foods. With wind in stomach, one cannot meditate. Different articles of food may produce wind in different people. So, you have to select your own food. Another thing is that you may be depressed at times. Sometimes you may be depressed by entering into conflict with others. Some disappointment might have caused the depression. You may wake up depressed in the morning due to previous Samskaras. If you are depressed, your mind will not be able to meditate. If you are a songster, sing a few devotional songs. Or, take a long walk. A long walk in the open scenery is a wonderful method for making you cheerful. Or just read something pleasant.

Or go to a pleasant garden. Use some intelligent method to get rid of that mood of depression. If there is pain in the body, you will not be able to meditate. Give some massage or fomentation and get rid of pain. All these I am telling, because in the vast majority, the conditions of the body do react upon the mind, and if these conditions persist the mind is pulled out from meditation.

Supposing you are able to meditāte, then you forget the body. Then you need not worry about all these things. Until that stage is reached, you have to take care of all these things. The best thing is to avoid all these obstacles. Always, before meditation do not overexert. Avoid the food that does not suit you. Avoid too much fatigue, depression and pain in the body. If the mind is not calm and serene you cannot meditate. An even mental tenure should be kept. Always a mood of serenity should be maintained. Vairagya is the most important thing. As long as Vairagya is not there, deluded attachment will take away the balance of mind. Therefore, desire, lust, anger, etc., have to be eliminated. They cannot be overcome in one year. Perhaps it may not be possible to overcome them even in ten years. But you should never leave the practice.

The type of tenacity that is required of an aspirant is hinted at by the Upanishads in a very beautiful way. A small bird that used to stay in the seashore found that the tide was about to wash away its nest. It therefore resolved to empty the

ocean with a blade of grass. A sage came to pass by that way. He saw this queer bird trying to empty the ocean. Look at the heart of that bird! What is ocean compared to the beak of a bird, with which it tried to empty the ocean! Even if it goes on for aeons emptying the ocean, the ocean cannot be emptied. But see the determination of the bird! Similarly the work of spiritual practice has to be carried on from birth to birth. In this life we should be prepared to keep on our efforts till the last breath. You must decide: 'I will keep up the effort at any cost and will not care for the result.' In he measure you strive, you profit. Even the sligh-est one good thought held in the mind, a single oc-asion of chanting the Name of the Lord, sticking) the truth once, even a single effort on the spi-tual path,—all these go on accumulating, and as cumulative effect of all of them finally the eye of tuition is opened. The gain that goes on accumu-ting is invisible. Only a seer will be able to know e transformation that takes place in the individual. cannot be known by the individual himself. There-re, you must have adamantine perseverance.

Day by day as you go on making effort all stacles are overcome, and you go above the ty-nny of the physical nature and later on above the anny of the mental nature also. When the high-mind dawns, when you are established in the e mind, then even a little bit of meditation gives tremendous spiritual power, and as you proceed meditation, it becomes deep and you become ready the eighth and last stage of Raja Yoga. That is

the stage of transcendental superconsciousness. It is technically referred to by the term Samadhi.

SOME MORE FACTS ABOUT MIND AND ITS CONTROL

We will consider some more important aspects of the nature of the mind, its behaviour and some of the well-tried and effective methods of slowly gaining control over the mind and making it progressively fit for concentration.

The first thing we have to understand about the nature of the mind is that mind is a creature of habit. Mind is a thing which always tends to follow whatever shape is given to it by habitual thought. Any thought that is held repeatedly tends to become part of the natural state of the mind, and this law can never be forgotten by the earnest seeker who is attempting to gain perfect control over his mind. I shall try to explain, in greater detail and in greater clarity, the implications of this peculiar characteristic of the mind.

If a student trying to qualify himself for the medical profession, studies for six years continuously in a medical college, then his entire mind becomes predisposed always to think in the groove of diseases, medicines and therapeutic treatment. Automatically his subconscious mind will be filled with thoughts of medicines, thoughts of patients, and all these thoughts will again and again revert to the centre. He will be less capable of thinking about other things and more predisposed to think about things of the medical profession. After a continuous

period of saturation of the mind with thoughts con-
nected with crime, civil disputes, application of law
courts and judges, what happens? Always the mind
gets a certain habitual predisposition which natural-
ly tends to hold only thoughts on these subjects.
Thinking of grief and thinking of crimes will be-
come its predisposition. Same is the case with engi-
neering or any other profession. An engineer's mind
is devoted to mathematics, and a whole shape is
given to his life, and he becomes engineering-mind-
ed. Even if he thinks about things other than engi-
neering, they will not be very effective. If a doctor
is also a seeker, and he sits to meditate, the type
of thoughts that come and distract him will always
be connected with hospitals, patients, etc. When a
businessman tries to concentrate on Yoga, profit and
loss, the market trends,—these are the things that
will always come and disturb him.

Now, this gives us a certain clue as to how we
can get control over the mind and succeed in con-
centration. What is that clue? You must, even
during your active outward life when you are mov-
ing and doing your ordinary work, always try to
fill the mind with the thoughts of the same object
upon which you are trying to meditate. Suppose
you are a Bhakta. The method which a Bhakta
will employ to gain control over his mind and pro-
gress in concentration upon his ideal,—Lord Rama,
Lord Krishna, Lord Siva, Devi, Jesus Christ or
Allah,—is that the Abhyasa should not be confined
to the hour of meditation alone. Suppose you sit
in the morning and in the evening for meditation.

Throughout the day you should maintain an undercurrent of the thought of the object of meditation. The Bhakta constantly thinks of Sri Rama or Sri Krishna or whoever is his Ishta. If you are a Chirstian always think of Jesus. You should never forget Him at any moment of the day. It is not only during prayer that the thoughts of your Ideal are to be continued, but they should always be kept during your Vyavahara also. The current of meditation should never be absent from your mind. Even during your active life the current should be maintained. It may not be as active and deep as during meditation. Nevertheless, it should be kept up and it should be continuous.

You know the story of Theseus. He went into a maze, where there was a monster. He had to kill the monster and come back. The maze was such that one who went in it could not come out. His friend gave him a ball of thread and said: "Go into the heart of the maze where there is the monster, and as you go in, go on releasing the thread. If you do not have any link with the entrance, it will be absolutely impossible to get out of it." This device was given to him. He followed the advice, and he was able to come back after killing the monster.

Even so the thread of concentration should be kept. Once you do concentration in the morning keep up the current. At noon you again sit for concentration and the link continues. During sleep also the subconscious mind carries on the process

of meditation. This will be found when during dream the current of meditation comes and alters the course of your dream. Supposing you are getting nightmares before you enter into Yoga. When nightmare comes you try to think of God. The same nightmare may again come in a lesser form. Suddenly inside your dream comes the consciousness: "God is constantly with me, how can anything come to me?" This courage is experienced even in dream state. That experience which used to terrify you will become powerless and it will pass off. So this gives us a hidden revelation that the current of Smarana is not lost even during dream and sleep states. Sometimes it manifests itself in a tangible form also. This continuance of the current of meditation throughout the waking, dream and sleep states keeps up the link of meditation and a certain portion of the mind goes on doing its ordinary work. This technique has been perfected in all the four Yogas. The wise have given us different devices in order to do this. According to Vedantic practitioners this method is called *Brahmabhyasa*. They meditate upon the formless Brahman when they sit in an Asana for the purpose and also throughout their work they keep up the thought that they are Brahman. This is also called *Brahmachintana*.

There is little difference between actual meditation and keeping of a subtle current of meditation. Whereas meditation is intense and deep and is accompanied by a total withdrawal of the senses from the sense-objects, so that the senses do not function externally, and you are absorbed, this Chintana

is not accompanied by a total withdrawal of the senses. Senses perceive the external world, and you are moving amidst the external objects, but the inner current is there. They also call it *Atmachintana*. This is a very effective method because it invokes the same law of the habit of the mind that it tends to be of that nature which it holds constantly in waking hours. When we constantly try to keep up the remembrance of our meditative Ideal, what happens? The same phenomenon is worked out, as in the medical student, the lawyer or the engineer. If you sit for meditation, what thought comes?—the same thing that it was having constantly during the day-time. What was it thinking? It was thinking of the Lord, the object of meditation. So this process should be developed as a technique by the practitioners of meditation.

A Bhakta tries to remember the Lord at all times—Smarana, as it is called. He does Manasic (mental) Japa of the Name of the Deity. If he is a Bhakta of Lord Siva,—whether he is moving about or listening to anything, whether he is doing physical work or mental work,—this current of 'Om Namah Sivaya, Om Namah Sivaya' goes on inside. If he is a devotee of Rama, the Name of "Sri Ram" goes on in the mind. These are the methods by which the mind is made to dwell upon the same object upon which it has to meditate during the Yoga practice. And this habit is the greatest asset to the practitioner of Yoga,—the meditator who is trying to advance in concentration and meditation. Another device which he makes use of to keep up the con-

stant remembrance, in addition to Japa is, to superimpose God on everything. He makes the whole mind filled with the thought of Ram, by feeling that whatever he sees, tastes or hears is Ram. Above, below, right, left,—everything is Ram. The clouds are Ram. The trees are Ram. In everything he sees God. All objects in this world, both moving and static, are Ram. He superimposes Ram and Ram alone on everything, and therefore everything in this world becomes *Ramamaya.*

Tulasidas has very beautifully given this idea in a couplet: "Knowing that the entire world is nothing but pervaded by Sita-Ram, again and again I prostrate before you with folded hands." In air, water, ether, in breath, in everything he sees the Lord. This is the lesson given in the eleventh chapter of Srimad Bhagavadgita. God is transcendent and He is also immanent. The immanence of the Lord is brought out to Arjuna. The Lord shows him His Cosmic form. Arjuna sees the Almighty Spirit alone everywhere. There is nothing other than the Lord. It is called the vision of the Cosmic Form. This is a marvellous technique of making the mind completely coloured with the supreme ideal when the mind itself slowly tends to take that form. If this practice is persisted in, wherever the senses may move, they never move away from the Lord. Where do the senses go? They go to the Lord alone. If the Sadhaka sees any object, there he sees only the Lord. If the eyes take him out, he sees only the Lord. If he hears something, he hears only the name of the Lord. Wherever the senses move,

they move towards the Lord. So, for him there is no distraction caused by the senses. Even the senses try to keep him in touch with God. This is a marvellous method for completely eliminating all distractions. For, the man beholds the Lord and Lord alone, and his external life is also covered by the chain of Brahma-Chintana. The Sikhs also make use of *Nam* and *Smaran.*

The mental and emotional attitude of a Karma Yogi makes it possible for him to achieve this object,—constantly feeling the presence of God. The basic emotional attitude which is found in a Karma Yogi has this technique spontaneously, for how can one worship without seeing God? You may fail to see God, but if you try to see God alone, what happens? A Karma Yogi by constant remembrance of the Lord, a Bhakta by repeating the Lord's Names, a Jnana Yogi by constant thought of the all-pervading Brahman and a Raja Yogi by keeping his mind always established in Pratyahara, change the thought-habit of the mind. The concentration of the Raja Yogi goes without difficulty. The habitual state of Pratyahara is firmly established in him. He is a master of this technique of not allowing the mind to go towards external objects. When he is perfectly established in Pratyahara, he takes up concentration. Thus, by becoming established in Pratyahara the Raja Yogi's mind is not given away to external objects, even when he is working, because his vision is changed. The external objects are to him like shadows.

Pratyahara for a Raja Yogi, Smarana and mental repetition for a Bhakta and the attitude of worshipfulness to a Karma Yogi and Brahmachintana for a Vedantin,—thsee are the processes by which the very thought-habits of the mind are changed. A new thought-habit is created in the mind. Instead of the worldly thought-habit, the Sadhaka acquires the God thought-habit. And when this habit is acquired, even in meditation thoughts inimical to meditation gradually lose their hold upon the aspirant. They begin to fade out and soon, a state of concentration is achieved, where all thoughts are of the same nature as the object of concentration and meditation. Therefore, they do not come as disturbing factors. They may lessen the intensity of concentration, but immediately concentration again picks up the original intensity. There is no break of the current of concentration. It is never broken, though it may become faint for some time. This practice should be constantly carried on, whether you are a Bhakta, a Vedantin, a Karma Yogin or a Raja Yogin.

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RAGA AND DVESHA

THE Raja Yogins say that Raga and *Dvesha* are the emotions, that disturb the mind most. Once they enter, they try to persist and completely upset the balance of the mind. They take the form of thoughts of hatred, jealousy, anger, intolerance and anxiety. These are all thoughts that are closely interwoven with emotion. Pure thoughts that are not associated with emotion are not serious obstacles

in Yoga. Mere dispassionate thoughts do not disturb you much. Sentiments, emotions and feelings are far greater disturbers in the mental field than mere intellectual thoughts. You cannot brush aside sentiments and feelings. To give a crude parallel, —supposing you are keeping a clean table and if some dust or mud happens to be on it, you can easily clean it. If you rub it with a duster, it will go away. But if a drop of honey is split, it will persist even after rubbing and dusting. Powder or any dry thing can be easily wiped out. Similarly intellectual thoughts can be easily removed, but if those become emotional it is very difficult to remove them. Even if the mind wants to remove sentimental emotions, the heart is not prepared to do so. Sentiment is very difficult to eradicate. It is more difficult to eradicate than intellectual, dry thought.

Fear, jealousy, hatred, intolerance,—all these things are emotional. They do not easily go out of the mind. We constantly move amidst the heterogeneous type of society. If any one does something which is not to your satisfaction, immediately you get irritated, and if some one stands before you whom you do not like, feelings of hatred come. He who is not established in equanimity becomes a constant prey to fits of temper. We may have to move amidst people who are wicked and who are spiritually on a lower plane than us. Then our mind is filled with hatred. We may have to move amidst equals. Even though one is your friend, you do not want him to be greater than you. The feeling that

you get may be full of jealousy, etc., and this disturbed thought always persists with equals. With superiors also you may have a different type of jealousy. "Why these people are superior to us? Why we may not have the same position as they have?" —such are our thoughts. The poor people may be jealous of rich people. One may resent the superiority of intellect of another man, and the moment one sees him, one may be thoroughly upset. One thinks: "Why I should not have the same popularity as this man has?" If you become a prey to this habit of the mind, what happens? You are constantly torn amidst these emotions.

There are so many pairs of opposites in this world, heat and cold, respect and disrespect, etc. Therefore you have no balance of mind and it is constantly agitated. Emotions are common experiences in the life of every man and therefore, the nind is always in an unpleasant state which disurbs your concentration. Therefore, the ancients iave given a formula how the Yogi should move n society, amidst people of different types. Suppose ou are always seeing and hearing wicked deeds of arious kinds in this world. You ask yourself: "Why uch wicked people are there?' You should not lose our balance. How? Practise friendliness towards quals, and compassion towards inferiors. Let your eart be moved when you are in the presence of inferiors. One may be inferior in status, age or wealth. : you are compassionate, you will bear all shortomings. Maintain a state of calm cheerfulness to iperiors. Be serene whatever they are. Be happy

in their presence. Towards the pairs of opposites what attitude you should have? Let all these pairs of opposites fill this world. Do not pay any attention to them. Why should you worry about them? The Lord is looking after everything. Therefore, this sort of Maitri (friendship), Karuna (compassion) and Udasinata (indifference) should be practised. If you practise all these, then the mind will become serene, and its emotions of hatred, intolerance and competition will be completely eliminated. This is the master-technique they have given.

PREREQUISITES TO MEDITATION

We have seen how for meditation it is very important to have a proper foundation prepared first by being established in virtue, self-restraint, control of the senses and dispassion (Vairagya). Because, succumbing to the attractions of the external objects is one of the factors which draws the mind outward and prevents it from going inward. Ethical perfection, restraint, Yama, Vairagya or dispassion,—these things have been considered because only if these preliminaries are properly attended to man's physical and moral nature can be properly trained and purified. Such an aspirant becomes a man of self-control, a man of goodness, a man who has overcome desires. Then it becomes easier for him to meditate and concentrate the mind upon higher, subtler object. If all of a sudden, without attending to these preliminaries, we begin to do meditation, it will be an uphill task and more energy will be wasted in carrying an endless tussle with

he mind, because the lower nature has not been
roperly converted. If by sheer force you try to
neditate upon things for which you are not fit,
crious consequences may result. The mind may
ecome unbalanced and depression might follow, be-
ause the lower nature is there. It has not been
onverted. A transformation has not been brought
out in the lower nature and if by sheer force of
termination and by resolution you try to force
e mind towards concentration and meditation, what
ppens? There is a conflict inside and this con-
t, many a time, tends to result in various unde-
able results.

Many of the aspirants who have not had the
per grounding in ethical science and who take
ilence and forcible meditation have their nervous
em weak with desires and passions. There is
efore a disturbance in the proper adjustment in
psyche, and the persons turn queer and eccen-
Psychic complexes arise in the seeker who
not prepared his nature for meditation and at
same time forces himself into meditation. How
you to know whether you are right or not?
this, it is always better to take the advice of
Master. It is a universally admitted fact that
body has got a good opinion of himself. Every-
eels that he is fit for meditation. It is quite
al, to each human being to think that he is
most important person. But you should not al-
his natural human weakness to retard your
ma. You should put yourself under the Master.

You should proceed with meditation cautiously. B‹
bold but be cautious.

Try to convert your nature from evil to good
by means of selfless service. To purify your heart
you should go on doing continuous selfless service
Do all sorts of menial service. No service is menia
for a man who employs service, as a part of hi
Yogic technique for purification of his mind. Yo
should wash the bed-pan of sick people. You shoul
clean the shoes to porters when they go to tak
food. At that time you should feel that you ar
worshipping the Lord. You should do it with ful
Bhava and humility. In such selfless service the eg
is lessened. The sense of superiority should comp
letely go, and for that you must do all sorts o
service. Sacrifice your own comforts and conveni
ences. Then only you can become self-sacrificing
All this you must do with joy. You must thin
that it is a great privilege that you are enabled t
do this thing. With joy you must think that t
have been given this opportunity of doing the ser
vice is a great privilege, a privilege undeserved b
you but conferred by God through His Grace.

You should serve with such feeling of absolut
humility, feeling: "I am not worthy to do it, bu
I have been allowed to do it with Divine Grace
You should not wait for some one to call you an
tell you to do a job. You should wait for oppo
tunity for service. By such service purity come
to the heart, and where there is purity, concentra
tion comes automatically. Therefore, you cann

overemphasise the importance of preliminary purification through selfless service, if your meditation is not to react upon you adversely and bring about undesirable results. Even in an advanced aspirant some struggle is there with the mind; but it is all the more so when the lower nature is not purified. In an unregenerated state closing the eyes will not do. It will be of no avail at all.

So with purified mind only one should attempt to do meditation, and we have seen how our ancients very wisely conceived of the fourfold measures. First of all, purify your nature by dedicated service, without any selfish desires and with worshipful attitude. When the mind gets purified, you try to concentrate and through elaborate formal worship steady the mind. Then through deep meditation, you pierce the veil and attain Illumination. Karma Yoga for purification, Bhakti Yoga for steadying the mind, and Raja Yoga for ultimately deepening your consciousness until the veil of your consciousness is removed. Then you have realisation. Jnana Yoga is ultimate realisation.

Always remember these—purification, selfless service and eradication of egoism, *i.e.*, a virtuous life of self-restraint and Vairagya. In meditation, various methods of concentration are given as helps. We have seen how the restraint of breath also helps in a twofold manner, because breath and mind are interconnected. When the breath is restrained the mind is controlled. When Prana is controlled Sattva increases. Sattva is always conducive to concentra-

tion. Rajas and Tamas are not conducive to concentration. So Pranayama has twofold advantages: it is good for rendering the body Sattvic, and also for fixing the mind on the goal.

If concentration is done in a monotonous way it becomes disgusting, Therefore, a number of methods of concentration should be followed. Try to concentrate on the evening star, or on the moon, or on some internal sound. Try to concentrate upon some pleasing colour. Sit down and try to evoke before you a mass of colour which you like best. Some people may like blue colour and some red. It may be any colour that pleases you. Let that colour fill your inner consciousness and try to hold it steadily. Some people try to concentrate on the smell of a rose. Try to feel that you are in the midst of a sea of aroma. That way also you can concentrate. Or, have more gross and physical objects for concentration. People try to keep a candle and concentrate upon it or a point on the wall. Some people want to concentrate by keeping the mind inward but keeping the eyes open. This is called Sambhavimudra.

Subtle concentration, concrete concentration, abstract concentration, external, internal—you can thus make the mind get the habit of concentration by giving it variety. Sometimes we have to deal with the mind as we deal with a child. Sometimes we may have to give it something pleasant. At some other times we may have to rebuke it. So according to the needs of the moment, you have to use

particular methods to make the mind concentrate. These are some of the methods for concentrating the mind and developing its inwardness, so that Dhyana may proceed smoothly.

SAMADHI

THROUGH the constant practice and through perfect establishment in Vairagya concentration increases and it becomes more continuous and unbroken, when we reach a stage of deep intense absorption, and this deep intense absorption is the eighth stage in Raja Yoga. It is called Samadhi. I think this word 'Samadhi' is by far one of the most widely misunderstood terms. What is Samadhi? Everyone knows the word and everyone is apt to know the meaning of the word wrongly. There are many things you have to know of Samadhi if you want to know what it actually implies.

Firstly, Samadhi is the eighth stage in Raja Yoga. It is only a stage in Yoga. Samadhi itself is not Realisation. That is the point which you have to understand, especially in Raja Yoga. It does not mean that a person who has attained Samadhi is a realised sage. He has to proceed further. This Samadhi is not peculiar to Raja Yoga alone. Jnanins speak of Advaita Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Hatha Yogins have got their Samadhi through the union of Prana and Apana and forcing it through Sushumna. These Pranas are forced up by means of Mudras and Kriyas through the various Chakras (plexus or cen-

tres of psychic energy) and you get Samadhi. Devotees refer to as going into Bhava Samadhi. So we find that the eighth stage of Raja Yoga, *viz.*, Samadhi, is found everywhere in Hatha Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Jnana Yoga. What is the difference between these various Samadhis? Is there only a distinction in name, or is there real difference? And in what sense these several Samadhis are used? Are these used in the same sense or are they used in different senses?

In Raja Yoga, when concentration becomes deep and continuous and the Yogi attains a state in which through the intensity of concentration, he acquires the ability to hold the mind perfectly still, that state is called Samadhi. It is a state of intense absorption. It is a state of deep inward absorption when the mind is perfectly collected and calm (Samyak Dharana). Holding of the mind is very intense and perfect. This state of holding the mind perfectly is called Samadhi. That is the Sanskrit derivation of the word, and this state of perfect absorption need not necessarily be a state of transcendental Illumination. Beyond a certain duration if the Yogi is able to hold the mind continuously,—say ten minutes or twenty minutes or thirty minutes—the time limit fixed in the Yoga texts—he may be said to have reached the stage called Samadhi. You should try to practise this day after day and enter into a state where you hold the mind steadily for a long time. As you go on persisting on this practice of Samadhi you will attain Illumination. It takes you to the highest state of superconsciousness.

and transcendental Illumination where you get the final Liberation. There are various kinds of Samadhis discussed in Raja Yoga, which one has to practise until the state of perfect Illumination is reached.

Illumination where you are deeply absorbed with consciousness of your individuality still persisting,—that is Samadhi of one kind. And when you rise higher, even the consciousness of your being lapses into the experience of Cosmic Consciousness. That is the perfection of spiritual realisation. That is a different stage. This is the way in which Raja Yogi looks at Samadhi. In the Samadhi of Hatha Yogins, through processes like Mudras and Pranayama, certain occult states are produced in the mind and the mind gets totally absorbed. In that Samadhi, they say the Vrittis are not completely destroyed once for all. Complete eradication of Vrittis does not take place. So, that Samadhi is not that which leads to Illumination. It is only a state of suppression. It is perfect suppression, but the total annihilation of the Vrittis is not achieved. So what happens? When he returns back to his normal consciousness, the Vrittis are still there. These Vrittis which are suppressed during Jada-Samadhi, as it is sometimes called, may spring up again to some extent. Therefore, this Samadhi,—the Jada-Samadhi achieved by certain Hatha Yogic techniques like Mudras, Pranayama, etc.—cannot give perfect freedom, is the view held by some people.

The Samadhi of Jnana Yogins is more or less similar to that of Raja Yogins. Raja Yogins at-

tain Samadhi by perfect concentration on the all-pervading Purusha. The Jnanin meditates upon the nameless and formless transcendental Atman and it is the totally impersonal Samadhi that is attained by him. There is not a least trace of the meditator's personality. The meditator's personality is completely wiped out. In the process of knowledge, you know, first of all there is the knower, secondly the object of knowledge and then the process of knowing. This triad is there. But when the knower himself is eliminated from that, what happens? When there is no knower, there is no question of knowing, and there is only one thing left. Whatever IS That alone exists. They call it Advaita Nirvikalpa Samadhi, where the knower, object of knowledge and the knowing process lapse into a transcendental experience which cannot be described, because who is there to describe It? When the experiencer himself has gone out of existence, who is there to experience? Suppose you have a beautiful doll made up of salt and you take it to the ocean. It suddenly gets a desire: "Let me know how this ocean is, how deep it is?" And so, it plunges into the ocean. The moment it gets into the ocean the salt dissolves, and it gets oneness with the ocean. What remains is the ocean alone. So, they say that this highest transcendental experience is Experience-Absolute. There is no relative touch at all.

In Bhakti this Nirvikalpa Samadhi comes as a result of Darsana of the Lord. The devotee is a worshipper, and when he comes face to face with his Ideal, then the process of dissolution of his per-

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sonality starts. It does not happen in a single instant, but gradually his personality becomes thinned out and ultimately the Ideal alone remains. Mira approaches the Lord and disappears. They call it Sayujya according to Bhakti Yoga. Becoming one with the Lord is Sayujya. When you break a pot filled with water, the reflection of the sun in the water of the pot gets absorbed in the sun. Similarly, when there is perfection of divine life, the personality of the devotee is completely absorbed in the Lord.

According to some philosophers, the process of absorption is like this. Suppose there is a Himalayan mountain of sugar and a small grain of sugar is put on the mountain. You cannot distinguish it. You cannot separate it. Yet, it retains its separate existence. It is only a way of putting it.

Once a Bhakta or Jnani or Dhyani reaches the ultimate Realisation in the depth of Samadhi, he is once for all free. There is no more pain or suffering and no craving. He reaches a state of plenitude where there is no more desire. He becomes, as it were, an ever-free, immortal Being. The body may persist. He may live and move, yet he has attained perfection and supreme realisation. Even when he comes out of Samadhi, he remembers the experience in Samadhi.

tain Sa-
por-

EVERLASTING BLISS

ALL THINGS upon this earth are passing. Therefore, they cannot give permanent joy. The moment the experience of enjoyment ceases, there is disappointment. Therefore, the wise have said: '*Sarvam Duhkham Vivekinah*,—to men of discrimination this world is characterised by pain.' In this existence you cannot find real joy. Yet, man tries to get joy which is lasting. The sages, therefore, cry out from the housetops : "O ye mortals! Wake up. Listen to our message. We have found that Eternal Thing wherein you will enjoy imperishable bliss. Reach that state which we have reached." That is the call of the Upanishads.

One great saint gave a parable. Three friends were walking and they came across a high wall. It was too high. So one man bowed down and the other two climbed one over the other. The third man who was on the top saw the other side of the wall. It looked like a paradise and seeing the joy there jumped into it. Then the second man said: "I will also try." The first man stood up and thus raised him. The second man also seeing the other side shouted in joy. But he was a man with a heart like that of saints. "Not only I have found it,

I should also enjoy it, but others also should enjoy it"—said he. He asked his friend to call all people. Then all people came. They were also raised up and they also saw that happy place. This is an example to show what one who has seen the Beyond says. He says: "Friends, there is a region which is an Ocean of Infinite Bliss. We have filled ourselves with that. You people, who are struggling here, can also experience this supreme bliss, where all pains vanish and where there is no Apurnata. That state you should try to attain."

The ultimate goal of every Jiva, individual soul, is the attainment of union with the Supreme Soul. Yoga means the joining of the limited self with the unlimited One—merging of the localised consciousness of the Jiva into the supreme Self. Even as the rain-water flows through the rivers and merges into the sea wherefrom it originated, so also the Jiva that has sprung up from the Supreme Atman reaches the Supreme Atman. Once this is done, all knots of the heart are rent asunder. This is that stage attaining which there is no other thing to be attained. This means the cessation of all sorrows and the acquisition of unlimited bliss and supreme peace. You have no more want. You have no more craving. You will feel yourself in a state of absolute plenitude. This is the culmination of Yogic endeavour.

Self-denial and ceaseless effort ultimately end in Yoga-Siddhi wherein we have supreme bliss. And what type of bliss is that? They say: "If you get a sea-fish and put it in a small bowl, it will try to

get out of the bowl to get at the unlimited freedom which it enjoyed before. But suppose some person, out of compassion, takes that bowl, goes to the sea, empties the bowl, and puts the fish back into the sea; the fish will be immensely happy. There it will go on swimming wherever it wants.". This is however a very crude analogy. The joy of infinite freedom comes to the soul when it becomes one with the Supreme Soul. And how to get some inkling of that supreme bliss? It is something which a person can never know. But all saints have again and again asked us: "Why are you going after shadowy pleasures? You have no conception of joy other than the enjoyment of objects. What is your highest conception of joy that you can have in the universe? You may reply that you must get whatever you want. That is the greatest joy that you can imagine; and who can get whatever he wants?" He who possesses everything in this world alone can have that privilege.

An ordinary physical creature has only physical appetites. He can have pleasures connected with the physical body. For instance, he can feel whatever his skin likes. A man of aesthetic sense can enjoy music which is denied to the merely physical man. The merely physical man does not have the musical taste. He cannot appreciate a wonderful picture either, as he has got no artistic sense. He cannot appreciate the sun-rise or the sun-set. Therefore, the more our senses are refined and as more aesthetic sense dawns on us, the greater are the vistas of joy opened up before us. If your aesthetic sense

is developed you can enjoy the best music and the best art. You have got all the refined manner of enjoyment opened up before you. So you do not go after gross sensual enjoyment and get diseases. Therefore, a man possessing everything and having absolute control over everything, can enjoy everything in this world. He can enjoy poetry, painting, and everything, and he can have honour from the whole world. He will get the satisfaction that he is the supreme lord over the whole world. That will be your highest conception of joy that you can have in this world.

They say if this sort of enjoyment is possible to conceive, and if one can get all of it—every sort of sensual enjoyment like dainty dishes, sex, etc., and also music, painting, etc.,—let the joy of that person enjoying all these be considered as one unit. The quantum of enjoyment of one who has done merit and become a celestial being, an angel called man-Gandharva, is considered to be a hundred such units, *i.e.*, a hundred times more than the enjoyment of the happiest human being in this world. The enjoyment of divine Gandharvas is said to be hundred times more than that of a man-Gandharva. Hundred times more than the joy of the divine Gandharvas is the enjoyment of Manes whose world is everlasting. Hundred times more than the enjoyment of those Manes is the enjoyment of those that are born as gods in heaven, and a hundred times greater in intensity and extent of their enjoyment is the enjoyment of Karma-Devas who become gods through meritorious Karmas. If the joy of these Karma-

was be multiplied a hundredfold it is one unit of of the permanent gods in the heavens. The of Indra who is the chief of the gods is still ndred times more than that of the gods, and a ndred times the joy of Indra is the joy of Brihasti, the preceptor of the gods. If the joy of Brihaspati is increased a hundred times it is one joy of Virat. A hundredfold more than the joy of Virat is the bliss of the Creator, Brahma, but infinite times more than the bliss of Brahma is the bliss of Parabrahman.

Emperor of the world, then a man-made angel from man-made angel to natural angel, then from natural angel to a Mane, then god born in heaven, Karma-Deva, and then natural god, then Indra, Brihaspati, Virat and Hiranyagarbha and then Parabrhman—is a calculus of joy given in the scriptures. So the bliss of the eternal, supreme fruit of Yoga is simply indescribable. So they say it is divine ecstasy. They cannot express it. That is the ultimate fruit of the state of superconsciousness which the Raja Yogi attains through the eight stages, Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. It is infinite bliss that dissolves your individual consciousness. One who gets this bliss cannot say anything. He becomes dumb as it were. Suppose you give the most delicious thing to a dumb man, he cannot express the taste. That gives you an inkling of the difficulty to describe in words the supreme Bliss into which the Yogi merges himself. That is the state of the highest Samadhi.

Suppose you prepare first-class Kheer by putt
rice and sugar into milk itself and boiling it. A
you have taken the Kheer the servant, while cl
ing the vessel finds some quantity left in the
sel, but he had poured water in it already. He dri
it and he gets some taste of the diluted Kheer a
not the pure, original undiluted Kheer. Similar.
only a small fraction of the Supreme Bliss alone i
what we can experience here. Until you get the
highest Samadhi, you get only so much of that bliss.

Suppose a man has heard some wonderful concert and gives an account of it. We can get some idea of the concert, but we cannot actually have a complete and correct idea of the concert. We can-
t enjoy the concert itself. So also, we can have
ly some idea of the great joy that is obtained from
ımadhi. Saints who have reached that stage are
ill living, though many of them cannot be recog-
sed. Those who have got the right Bhava, will
e able to recognise them and will get impetus from
ıch souls to reach perfection. Those who have seen
ıat wonderful vision of that Supreme Being try to
xpress how that beauty looks like. The beauty of
ll the most beautiful women of the world pales
nto insignificance when compared to the beauty of
he celestial nymphs. Man cannot even look at them.
They are so beautiful. But, to a man of Realisation
even they appear like ash in a crematorium. They
will be absolutely disgusting to him.

So we have known something about the bliss of Self-realisation. We should always strive to get

y that bliss. What is the bliss of all worldly ob-
ts put together when compared to That! The bliss
Realisation is limitless bliss. The bilss of the
n-self is limited. The bliss of the Self is eternal.
never perishes and you are yourself That. That
your real nature. But through ignorance and de-
re you have forgotten your real nature. Control
e senses, remove ignorance and know your real na-
re. Be still and know the Self and attain the
ipreme Bliss. That is the message of Yoga.

SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDA

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

OM SHANTIH! Peace be unto you all.

The matter contained in this book with the title, 'PATH TO BLESSEDNESS" is a simple exposition of the inner Science of Self-realisation through the path of self-subdual, mind-control, concentration and meditation. It is all about the now well-known Yoga-Aphorisms of the great sage and teacher of India known as Maharshi PATANJALI who taught about five thousand years ago and left for humanity the quintessence of the Yoga-Science in his short, terse and meaning-filled Sutras or brief aphorisms. The Sutras being so very concise and pithy, their full meaning is not easily understood at first reading. They have to be explained. The great sage Maharshi Veda-Vyasa, the author of the eighteen classical Puranas did this for us by writing his Commentary on Patanjali's Yoga-Aphorisms. Much later on, a very learned disciple and seeker Vachaspaty Mishra wrote a more elaborate Gloss explaining the full meaning of sage Vyasa's commentary. The present lessons in this book are based upon the teachings given in the above-mentioned Yoga-Texts.

Why have I given these lessons? What is the purpose of my doing so? This entire book consti-